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FATHER CONNELL.

VOL. III.

MR. NEWBY

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(In One Volume Foolscap 8vo.)

THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM;

A Tale of Palestine,

BY EDMUND PEEL, ESQ.

Bonchurch.

Catherine Napan

FATHER CONNELL,

BY

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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FATHER CONNELL.

CHAPTER I.

On the night of the fire in Nick Mc Grath's hay-loft, and previous to that occurrence, it will be brought to mind, that after his interview with the beggar girl in Joan Flaherty's house, Edmund Fennell paid a visit, on her account, to Father Connell. He communicated to the old man all he knew concerning her. He described the shocking outrages, which to his own knowledge, she constantly endured from Robin Costigan; fully detailing the scene he had witnessed from the top of the dividing wall, when he was a little boy, and an inmate

of Nelly Carty's cabin. He dwelt on the poor girl's terror of the old beggarman; her tears and wailings; her rooted dislike of the life she was leading, under his rule; her wish to change that life, and escape from Costigan; and her ever recurring dread, that if she attempted to do so, her fearful tyrant would inevitably track her out and kill her. He reminded the priest of her utter ignorance of religion, a fact which Father Connell himself had ascertained; but enlarged on her religious tendencies, notwithstanding, discoverable in her hatred of what was bad: her sympathy, with what was good and generous; her appreciation of a charitable act; and her meek submission under cruel persecution.

Passing from his boyish, almost childish acquaintance with poor Mary, Edmund then took up an account of their re-meeting, after an interval of so many years, in Nick Mc Grath's shop that very evening. He proceeded with their conversation, in one of the shower of

houses. Father Connell struck with a new interest, although he had been sufficiently interested before, drew from Edmund, by continued questions, a very minute statement of this interview; not only as to what was said during it, but also as to what had occurred between the two young people. The lad could not help blushing, but he was perfectly able to meet every enquiry, with the consistency of fearless truth. His old protector proposed other questions, and he also met them to the priest's satisfaction. It could not be denied he admitted, that the poor, untaught young girl, regarded him with feelings that would have been improper if indulged, as she seemed to indulge them, by any person at all instructed on moral, social, or religious points; but Edmund submitted that from the whole experience of her young life, it was impossible she could ever have been taught the impropriety of giving way to such feelings, indeed, her very avowals of them, open, and ingenuous as they were,

proved as much; and did they not also prove another thing? Did they not also prove, that she herself did not know the tendency, the range, the very nature of all that she now vaguely and incipiently felt.

Father Connell laid his hand on Edmund's shoulder, and smiling benignly nodded to him at once an assent to his proposition, and an encouragement to go on.

Availing himself of the permission, Edmund proceeded to relate, how, according to Mary's own account, she still suffered from the gross and brutal treatment of Costigan; how her aversion to her present course, had even encreased since Edmund and she last met, but how, at the same time, her fear of being murdered by Costigan bound her to it. He turned to her aspirations, after a good and virtuous life; to the truth of her sentiments towards all in outward nature, from which she had had an opportunity of studying a good lesson; to the gifted order of her mind, evident through all

the clouds of neglect, and of youthful sorrow which hung around it. He ventured to allude to the great beauty of her person and features; nor was his old listener displeased with the allusion; for beauty of heart, has a certain pure and holy sympathy, even in the breast of well disciplined old age, with outward personal beauty in youth; and Edmund, waxing eloquent, concluded, by asking Father Connell to decide whether it would not be a charitable and a delightful action to rescue, for society and for God, a creature like Mary Cooney, by snatching her from the power of Robin Costigan, from his murderous threats, and his probable execution of them; and from his evil ways, and bad example, a continuance in, and observation of which, might, notwithstanding her present dispositions, end in her moral ruin.

"I will ask you only one question more, Neddy Fennell, my child," said Father Connell; "and you will answer that question truly —I know you will, Neddy."

"I will, sir."

"I know very well you will, Neddy. What are your own feelings towards this poor, young creature?"

"I pity her from my heart, sir; I have a great respect and regard for her keeping herself so long good, in the midst of wicked example; I have a great interest in her future well-doing; and I feel towards her, short as our acquaintance has been, the full friendship that a brother feels for a sister."

"And you have no other feelings for her?"

"None, sir."

"Then, Neddy, my child, she shall indeed, with God's blessing, be saved from Robin Costigan's hand. He shall not kill either her body or her soul; no Neddy, that wicked man shall not. I will take her from him. Under this poor roof she shall have an opportunity, at least, of growing to be a good woman, and a useful woman, and a faithful servant of the Lord. I will go this very evening and take

her from Robert Costigan: aye, and I'll make him give her up to me, without a word. I am not afraid of the bad man, Neddy; no, I am not afraid of him, Neddy, my good child. And go you home, now, Neddy to your business for the night; go you home to your good old master's house; and go straight home to it. And may you have a reward, Neddy, for your charitable and for your virtuous intentions towards that poor, uninstructed, unbefriended, orphan child. Good night, Neddy, and take my blessing. I will see Mary Cooney, this very evening."

But Father Connell was detained at home by a visitor, on business of a most urgent nature, too long to perform his promise. Indeed it was much past his usual hour for retiring to bed, when the person went away. Some time after, the fire bell struck on his ear. He hurried into the town with strong fears, as has been seen, for Ned Fennell; and all that he

did subsequently is also known. In the first early light of the morning he led the poor beggar girl home.

His housekeeper, Mrs Molloy, had not been left quite unacquainted with his intentions towards Mary Cooney. In fact, it was the housekeeper's opinion that Father Connell had consulted her, very confidentially, on the matter; nay, in order to reconcile her to the introduction of a new inmate into her establishment, that he had made a very powerful appeal to her feelings; and this, even Mrs. Molloy's sense of her own respectability could not withstand. She was, therefore, prepared to receive poor Mary with something akin to graciousness of manner.

At Mrs. Molloy's kitchen fire, then, Mary was soon sitting, bareheaded, bare footed, and otherwise half clothed; the scraps of attire which she did wear being wet, from the inclemency of the day before; while her little

feet were splashed with puddle, and blood stained too, from the bleeding of sore cracks, and wounds in them.

Tears were in her eyes, smiles were on her lips, and short, happy sighs fluttered every moment, like so many small birds let loose one after the other, from the depths of her heart. She looked around her, scanning the humble little kitchen; it was a drawing-room to her; never in her life before had she sat to such a fire, nor in an apartment half so luxurious—so sumptuous. She looked at Mrs. Molloy, and at her high-heeled shoes, and at her high-cauled cap, and deemed her a person of very great importance; and Mrs. Molloy was not slow in observing the effect her superiority had produced; and thus Mary was all the better of her mute and unconscious sycophancy.

Father Connell having warned and commanded his housekeeper not to speak for the present with the beggar girl, on her own affairs, and his housekeeper obeying him, for a

wonder, few words, except words of kindness, passed between her and the young stranger at her hearth. She busily engaged herself preparing the priest's breakfast; and at all her proceedings Mary still looked on, with great wonder and curiosity.

Father Connell had been out about an hour. He now returned, and called out from the parlour, for "Peggy!" and Peggy, answering his summons, found that he had brought home a pair of shoes, and a pair of stockings, for his new protegèe; together with materials, very humble indeed, for dressing her out, from head to foot. But until the latter could be made up, he earnestly consulted Peggy upon the best thing to be done, towards obtaining present substitutes for them. Peggy, after a pause, and bargaining for permission to have her own way in the matter, sallied forth from the house, and quickly came back, laden, however she had procured them, with a little stock of the necessaries required. They had been used indeed,

but were clean, neat, and respectable, and Mrs. Molloy averred, would fit Mary to a T, for she thanked Providence, she had eyes in her head. Her master, approving of everything, Mrs. Molloy swept the table clear of its little heap of habiliments ready made and raw materials for the same; and the next instant, she and her young friend were busily engaged in the housekeeper's bedroom, off the kitchen.

Father Connell would not—could not sit down to breakfast pending the great change that was going on under his roof. He walked about his parlour, bolt upright, champooing the palms of his hands, very very fast, and smiling smiles, as fresh as those of childhood. At last, the parlour door opened, and Mary Cooney, ablutions and the other business of the toilet all gone through, appeared before him; Mrs. Molloy—as if Mary bodily and altogether were of her construction, and not merely the tie of the bau-knot of her cap, leading her in, with an air of great self approbation. The old

man stood still, and his smiling features half changed into an expression of surprise, at the vision of the beautiful creature, he now gazed upon. Her newly polished face, burning with blushes, caused by her shyness of her fine clothes, and her blue eyes scintillating and enlarged, with a new-come excitement, the beggar girl did appear, indeed, surpassingly lovely.

He was struck too, with her likeness to Helen Mac Neary—as any one might have been; and he thanked Heaven, in a silent aspiration, that his good child, Neddy Fennell, had been the means, under God, of directing his attention to the salvation, here and hereafter, of a creature so interesting in every way.

But this purely grave state of feeling, anon, and quickly passed into a characteristic mode of expressing his delight, in the change for the better, wrought upon her outward appearance. As he has been seen to do, while the little ma-a-clad boys, were passing him in the bosheen,

he bent himself, resting his hands upon his knees, admiring her finery, and then, standing straight, and laughing to himself, clapped the palms of his hands together softly, and declared to Peggy, that nothing on the face of the earth could be better; and, as will also be called to mind, in the same way that he had turned Mick Dempsey round and round, and walked round and round him, in approbation, of Mick's first new suit of respectable clothes, he now turned Mary Cooney round and round, and walked round her. At length, the inspection over, he dismissed Mary and her new protectress, to their breakfasts in the kitchen, and then sat down to his own, very happy.

But though Mary was happy too, even to tears, which constantly streamed on, she made but little impression on the dainties before her, at least not one half, nor one third enough, to satisfy the ostentatious hospitality of Mrs. Molloy. The poor girl's mind had been suddenly stopt, and turned back in the circle in

which it was wont to revolve, and though all was very blissful, all was, from its novelty, still very confusing. She did not yet understand, nor distinctly feel her changed position. She glanced shyly from one point to another of her new attire. She studiously regarded, above all things, her new shoes and stockings, and particularly admired the smallness of her feet, now shut up for the first time, within limits which controuled their usual flatness and expansion. Opposite to her was a mirror hanging on a nail in the wall, of about six inches in height and three in breadth, at which Mrs. Molloy upon a sudden call from the parlour, used to adjust her cap, and her strong wiry hair; and into this Mary could look at her own face, with its recent decorations; and all these little things at first deeply occupied her, almost to the exclusion of any other sentiment or feeling.

Father Connell went out on business, and she was left alone with the housekeeper, at the

kitchen fire. After a while, recollection began to engage her. Darby Cooney, was she indeed safe from his hand? She asked Mrs. Molloy to give her assurance on the subject. The housekeeper, still obeying her master's instructions, asked in return, how could she know anything about it? And who was Darby Cooney? But wasn't she safe at present; and wasn't she with friends, who would keep hurt and harm far away from her? And wouldn't the priest answer everything to her, when he came back to the house? and Mrs. Molloy admonished her not to go on thinking any more of what was past and gone but to stir herself, and come with her, Mrs Molloy, and inspect the "nate" house she was in, and the garden it had to it; and after that, the elegant chapel, and the beautiful churchyard, only half a stone's throw from her.

Mary had other questions to ask, but she suppressed them. She arose, stumbling for the first time in her life, from the cramping effects

of thefirst pair of shoes she had ever worn, her feet swollen by the influence of the fire, as well as by their novel state of captivity; and followed Mrs. Molloy on the proposed tour of discovery.

She had been in the parlour for a moment, before, but under such circumstances, as only to have felt embarrassed with an overpowering sense of its importance. Now she dwelt under Mrs. Molloy's special instructions, on each article of furniture it contained. A small glass bookcase, filled with books, sparingly and smearingly gilt on the backs, particularly attracted her attention, and her wonder; she did not think that there were so many books in the world, she said. Leaving the parlour; an old eight-day clock, almost eight feet high, placed in the little hall, with an old brass dial plate, struck her with great awe, as well it might indeed. She stopped before it, and listening to its clogged and wheezing tick, tick; she shrank back, asking in a whisper, if there

was not something alive within it? Mrs. Molloy then pointed out to her the cellarage, under the open stairs, with its constant occupant, the half barrel of beer, and Mary conceived great notions of the abundance of the house.

They proceeded up stairs to the priest's bed-room. Here were a few little religious prints, "framed and glazed," as Mrs. Molloy desired Mary to observe well; and in a corner, hung upon great brass hooks, Father Connell's Sunday hat and best wig; together with the mysterious old chest of drawers; and the young girl felt, she knew not why, an indefinable sense of a something — almost dread, which made her hurry out of the apartment.

They passed into the yard. The stable, containing Father Connell's fat, strong mare; the step ladder going up to it's hay-loft; Neddy Fennell's black hole of yore—the coal shed; the cask to catch rainwater; the lines to hang the house-linen on for drying; all this, and much more, were pointed out to Mary, whose mind

still continued to fill, and fill with great conceptions of the magnificence of the establishment. From the yard into the narrow strip of garden—and Mary clapped her hands, and almost screamed out with pleasure. Small as was the little lot of ground, it was neatly kept, at all seasons of the year, and even now, on a November day, looked trim and pretty. Such vegetables, of the ordinary sort, as the month produced, were well taken care of; unoccupied ground was dug up, and raked, and in clean order; the little walks were newly gravelled; fruit trees were pruned, and nicely nailed to the walls; and though the little garden's blow of humble flowers was of course over, there still remained the white and pink flower of the laurestinus, and here and there bunches of monthly roses and rosebuds. Mary was in a paradise. Never before, had she seen, a garden, great or small, and now the order, the neatness, the beauty of this little one, no matter on how reduced a scale, struck upon chords

prepared by Almighty nature to vibrate to them, in her soul. She glowed with a new pleasure. It was as if a garden had suddenly and freshly sprung up, amid the hitherto moral wilderness of her own mind. She prayed, she begged of Mrs. Molloy to let her pluck one rose—no, one rosebud—only one; the old lady consented, and as Mary placed it under her young bosom, it sparkled with her tears.

They left the enchanted spot, and proceeded up the silent little approach to the chapel, walled in at either side. They arrived at the very limited space before the chapel, almost entirely covered with the branches of a large lime, having a stone bench under it. Mary sat down on the bench, looking earnestly around her.

"And was that a chapel? A "chapel of God?" she asked of Mrs. Molloy, in a whispering voice, pointing to the low-built and rude little edifice, now straight before her.

Her cicerone answering affirmatively, un-

locked the chapel door, and invited her to enter it. She did so.

Since leaving the priest's house, all had been as silent as the tomb around her; and the silence still continued, as they stepped into the humble place of worship. What the wonders of St. Peter's have been, and are to others, the wonders of this little chapel, were to poor Mary. Its little galleries, propped by wooden uprights —they scarce merited a better name; its little chandelier, also of wood, and covered with dingy gilding; its little altar—gained by a few steps; the picture of the crucifixion—not by a Reubens, or an Angelo, or a Rembrandt—everything filled her with sentiments of awe, admiration, and delight.

"Who is that?" she whispered, looking up to the picture over the altar.

"Our blessed Lord, who died on the cross, to redeem and save us," replied Mrs. Molloy, making the holy sign upon her forehead.

"To save us from what?" continued Mary.

"Yes! I see He is dying—there is blood coming from His side!" She turned pale.

Mrs. Molloy was at first sorely tempted to burst out, and thunder, upon Mary's scandalous state of religious ignorance; but luckily recollecting Father Connell's parting injunctions, contented herself, with causing Mary to retire from the chapel, and return home with her. Arrived at the priest's house, and while passing its little yard, Mary glanced wistfully to the garden gate.

"Would you like to go sit in the summer house till the priest comes home?" enquired Mrs. Molloy.

It was the very liking most at Mary's heart that moment; and she accordingly walked to the little osier bower, at the garden's further end, and sat down in it alone.

In this situation, it cannot be said that Mary distinctly thought over anything; and yet her mind was thronged with a vast assembly of imperfect thoughts—snatches of reflections, and

recollections, newly acquired ideas and sentiments, hopes, doubts, fears—the buzz of a great change going on within her; sometimes a swelling yet timid sense of her increasing importance; sometimes a sickening mistrust of herself; and all these abstractions dashed over, now and then, by realities, which moved her very soul; her terrors of Darby Cooney, at one moment; her reliance upon Father Connell's power to protect her against him; her anxieties a contrary way, the next moment; flitting recurrences to Nelly Carty, the woman who had told her she was her daughter; but, through all, and pervading all, and above all, one master idea, that of Edmund Fennell—was he well? Had he escaped Robin Costigan's revengeful intention? Mary had asked these questions of Mrs. Molloy, without obtaining any satisfactory replies. And why had he not been to see her ever since last night? And when would he come to see her? And was she to stay in the priest's house, or go to his?"

Profoundly wrapt in her mental confusion Mary did not perceive the approach of a person into the little arbour. Suddenly her wandering and down-cast eye caught a glance of his feet, and she uttered a short shriek, and hid her face in her hands. But the good priest's voice re-assured her.

She dropped on her knees, and in the whine of her old trade, not yet forgotten, poor thing, fervently thanked Father Connell for hiding her from Darby Cooney, and keeping him away; and prayed blessings from Heaven on the priest's head, for all his charities to her.

Had she been well since morning? Very well, and very happy? And was Mrs. Molloy good and kind to her?

Mary answered that she had been very well, and very happy; and that Mrs. Molloy was everything that heart could wish; and that Darby Cooney had never come "next or nigh her," the whole morning.

"And he never shall, my good little child,"

said Father Connell, "I will keep him away from you, as long as you stay in this house, at least; I have the power over him to keep him away; I am stronger than Darby Cooney." Mary began to look puzzled. "Yes, my good little child, I am stronger than Darby Cooney; and all round my house, and all round my little garden, and all round my chapel there are guards to keep him away from you, my poor child; guards more courageous than soldiers — so, have no fear of Darby Cooney's hand, now, or for the time to come."

During this speech, Mary glanced to the tops of the garden walls, and down the garden into the yard; but there were no guards to be seen, and some misgivings again possessed her for a moment; but it soon occurred to her that Father Connell was a good man, and had already done a great deal for her; so that whatever he said must be true, and she would believe it.

"An' shure Masther Neddy Fennell didn't

come next or nigh me ever since last night either, sir," she resumed after a while; and expressing anew her gratitude to her protector; "did Darby Cooney do him any harm last night, sir? An' was his house afire last night? An' can you tell me, sir, why he is away all the morning? An' how soon will he come to see me?"

Answering these questions in due order, Father Connell hesitated at the last two, and asked her, "But why do you want him to come and see you, my good child?"

"Och, that *I* may see *him* at the same time, an' talk to him, an' hear him talkin' to me; an' that I may be near him, an lookin' at him —an' for ever thankin' my tendher-hearted boy fur his charity, an' his goodness to the poor shooling girl."

"And why do you want to be looking at him, and talking to him, Mary?"

"Och, och, an' isn't it because the love is on my heart for him!"

It was Father Connell's duty, and it had been his intention, to frown at this easily foreseen declaration; but now he could not. On the contrary, smiles played around his lips, as he stared straight into Mary's face, and remained for a moment silent. And, during that moment, he made up his mind to defer all further notice of the case, plainly seeing that it was one of unconscious error, which did not call for sternness or severity in his treatment of it. He resumed speaking however—and it will be perceived that, before entering the little garden, he must have conferred with his housekeeper on her and Mary's adventures during the day.

"Well, poor child, well; and didn't Mrs. Molloy shew you the chapel to-day?"

"Och, yis, sir, yis; an' 'tis itself that's the beautiful place, an' the grand place; an' there's a beautiful image hung up in id, that she tould me was our blessed Lord, dyin' on the cross to redeem an' save us

—an' och, sure enough, the blood was comin' down his side afore my eyes; did He make himself die, sir? did He kill himself?"

"No, Mary, no; sinners and wicked people nailed Him to that cross until He died upon it."

"Och, och, an' sure, very wicked people they were; people like Darby Cooney, weren't they, sir? An' tell me this, sir, if you plase; aren't you sthronger nor Darby Cooney? an' shure you wouldn't let Darby, Cooney nail you to a cross, to kill you? An' wasn't our blessed Lord sthronger nor them wicked people? An' why didn't He keep 'em off, an' not let 'em nail him to a cross and kill Him?"

While imparting instruction to a talented child, the most competent preceptor is often baffled by the child's point blank questions. In answer to such questions, a case of reasoning in series cannot with fitness, or advantage be attempted, and without this, the full

dissipation of the child's doubt is impracticable. Regarding the present subject, in discussion between herself and Father Connell, poor Mary's mind was as that of a child, and her question was such a one as a child would put, and therefore Father Connell smiling again, found a difficulty in meeting it. After a short pause, however, he went on.

"Yes, Mary, yes, my good little girl. He was stronger than all those wicked people, and stronger than all the people in the world, good as well as wicked; stronger than all the kings, and all the priests, and all the grandees, and all the armies of the world; stronger than the whole world, my good child; and if it had been His will, the whole world could not have hung him upon that cross: but he did not use his strength against the wicked people, Mary; he let them put him upon that cross, in order that he might redeem and save us."

"An' save us from what, sir?" Mary now repeated a former question, proposed to Mrs. Molloy.

"From the punishment due to our sins, my poor child; from the punishment due to our sins."

Mary paused, and evidently tried in her mind to understand this proposition; but Father Connell, watching her, saw that she could not —nor had he expected that she could. Suddenly, however, her eyes and cheeks glowed; suddenly she gave up the cold process of reasoning; suddenly she *felt* the truth, and said:—

"Och, och, an' it was a great great love that he had on his heart fur us, sir."

"That's it, that's it, my good child," resumed Father Connell, seizing, and of course squeezing hard both of Mary's hands. "That's the very thing, my poor, poor girl; that's the very answer to your own question, as truly given as if all the doctors of all the colleges in the wide world had found it out for you; come in now, Mary, my dear; we will talk of this, and of a great deal more, another time; but not soon, not very soon, Mary: with God's

help Mary, you will be a good child, a very good child; and I hope, and I trust, and I believe, a blessed child. Come in now, come in till we see what Mrs. Molloy has to give us for our dinner; Mrs. Molloy is a good woman, Mary, only a little rough spoken now and then, a very good woman; and Mrs. Molloy is beginning to love you, Mary; and if you are good to her, and submissive to her, I am very sure she will love you better and better day by day. Come in now, Mary, come in—Peggy!" he cried out, as they approached the house; and "Peggy" resounded through it, as Father Connell and his new favorite crossed its threshold.

From that day forward Father Connell did not prematurely engage in difficult questions of religion with the beggar girl. As if he had had to instruct a mere child indeed, he led her on, step by step, through its more flowery paths, and almost according to the routine course of childhood.

Mrs. Molloy, and some good religious women who resided together in the neighbourhood—the same who, dressed in white linen cloaks, sang during vespers, inside the railings of the altar—taught her her prayers, day after day, and finally her catechism, Father Connell often overseeing them, or calling on Mary, as her lessons went on, to account for the faith that was in her; and his occasional conversations with Mary never were without some questions, on her part, regarding her new and delightful stock of knowledge, which it was most pleasing to him, as her comprehension grew more enlarged, to answer satisfactorily. Her progress was surprising. In about nine months the priest deemed her fit to approach her first communion; and she was also baptized on the same day. Oh, happy, happy was Mary, while she went through the business of that day, clad in her white muslin dress, and her cap with white ribbons in it. Happy, and yet tearful; proud of the day, and of herself, and yet the humblest

of the humble. It was a time of flowers, too, and Mary had them all around her.

But Father Connell encountered a little more difficulty in removing from her mind a certain impression. Recurrence must again be made to the first days she spent under his roof. Her question of—"bud when would Masther Neddy Fennell come?" was almost ceaseless, and the priest at first only told her why he could not come. His old master was so ill, and he was so much engaged. "But if the whole world was dyin' I'd go see my tender hearted boy," she said. Nick Mc Grath died, and she allowed some days to lapse, but then repeated her question. Father Connell now met her with an account of Edmund's great occupation in superintending the old man's affairs, and with a statement of his newly acquired riches, according to the will made in his favour by his master. Mary was glad he was so rich, but sorry that his great business kept him away. Days passed over and she said she should

like to go out on the roads, and walk here and there. The priest himself accompanied her forth, and led her for a walk, by the adjacent river's brink—a delightful walk, during the course of which everything around her was arrayed in nature's fully-matured gorgeousness. Thoroughly did she enjoy this recreation; but still she came back to Father Connell's house, dispirited, and feeling a great want.

Some more days passed on, and Father Connell told her that Edmund Fennell was to come and dine with him, previous to his going a great, great way off—to Dublin, in fact—there to engage in new pursuits, which the good man tried to explain to her. Mary changed colour, but listened meekly, and only said—"God spread the good luck, an' the happiness in his road, wherever he goes."

Edmund did come to dine with Father Connell, and Mary was summoned to speak with him in the parlour, in Father Connell's presence; but though her heart at first bounded

to meet his heart, and though herself first bounded forward to be encircled in his arms, and though Edmund was not wanting in all show of affectionate interest, still the poor girl began to feel vaguely that there was in future to be a distance measured between them, and she retired weeping to her kitchen. Dinner came on, and she received the impression more strongly when she observed that Edmund and Father Connell dined together, and that she and Father Connell's servant dined together.

Edmund was retiring for the evening—the last he was to spend, for some time, in his native city. Mary was again called in, that he might bid her farewell. She entered the parlour with a humiliated and touching air—but not a bit of ill temper in it. Edmund shook her hands, kissed her cheek, and spoke still most affectionately to her. In return, she kissed his lips and prayed the blessing of God "on his road, wherever he went."—He left the house, at-

tended to the outside door, by Father Connell. The priest returned to Mary, and found her sitting stupified on the floor.

" When he was a very little boy, my poor child," the priest said, " he promised you if ever he should be rich, he would share his riches with you; and now, my poor child, see whether he does or not—only see ;" and he emptied a purse of gold into her lap.

Mary put her hand under the guineas and let them drop, almost one by one, back again into her lap, and at last dolefully said—" may the good God reward him for his charity ; but I'd rather have the love from Neddy Fennell than all this goold sir."

But in some time Mary became contented with her lot ; and then, more than contented—happy. Day by day, a great and revering love for her protector sprung up in her heart, nearly to the exclusion of the former sentiment. Her religious duties, too, engrossed her, and very soon, Father Connell called in Mick

Dempsey to engage her mind in fresh studies; and her progress in reading and writing—in reading, in fact, so as to be able to occupy and interest herself, was as surprising as was that which she had made in higher pursuits.

But her witnessing casually Edmund Fennell's marriage with Helen Mac Neary, from her secret position in the little hall, proved, as regarded her love for him, a great drawback upon all her acquired discipline in the conduct of her young heart.

CHAPTER II.

TWENTY-FIVE, or twenty-six miles to the north-east of Father Connell's city, and in another county there stood, in the times of which we write, what had been a good country mansion, now in ruins. Its living owner, as he was also the owner of a very considerable tract of adjacent acres, had never been seen by the dwellers on his noble estate. In fact he resided in nabob style in another country.

In his despatches to his agents, his constant cry was, like the gnome, for "more, more," and in the highly civilized land in which he sojourned, desperate, and unteachable savages

he called those from whom he drew his ample income, never admitting, meanwhile, that the merciless exactions inflicted on his wretched tenantry, by his agents, to meet the insatiable craving for "more, more," had made those deserted people poor beyond endurance; and necessarily reckless and fierce towards all whom they considered as the causers of their oppression. But our history can have little to do with this matter, further than that we are bound to allude to it, in order to show how it was that the once noble mansion, was now visited by ruin—the ruin of neglect, rather than of time.

A flight of many steps ascended to its hall door, but the balustrade at either hand had tumbled down; and grass grew up through the joints of the steps, which were loose under foot. No glass was in any of the windows, and in some were fragments of sashes only; while their shutters, which had been closed never to be re-opened, fifty years before, had either

partially or totally decayed, and when the wind was high, their remnants flapped, or creaked dismally. The once solid hall door was rotten, and, although the iron bolt on the inside still held it in its place, it could very easily be opened. The sashes, frames, and shutters of the windows on the lower story were altogether gone; and the brood of a surly old sow could occasionally be seen scampering in and out through them in full career, and at their unbridled pleasure. Most of the aged trees of the adjacent park, were denuded of their branches; the fish ponds to the right and left of the house, were a mass of aquatic weeds, emitting an unwholesome vapour; the shrubberies were choked up with bramble and briar; their neatly sanded walks no longer visible, every thing around you had an air of chilly neglect and dilapidation.

The park was rented by a farmer, whose thatched dwelling arose in one of its most picturesque spots. Some time before the period

with which we are concerned, this person sent one of his labourers to the house, a distance off, with instructions to fix himself in some sheltered nook of the ruined dwelling, and act as caretaker for his employer. One night only did the man hold his post, for so dreadful a night had that proved to him, that, as he said and swore, he would not accept the whole year's rent of the estate to pass another like it. There had been such rattling of chains, and stamping of feet, up and down the old staircases, and such frightful laughter in remote parts of the crumbling edifice, and such calling him by his name, and altogether such a hellish uproar and revelry, as never was known in this world before.

A long, straight, broad avenue, perfectly arched overhead by the junction of two rows of very fine old oaks, ran from the house to the public road. We should rather say that these oaks traced out the course of an avenue that had been; for no distinction at present existed

between the grassy way under foot, and the land at its either side. Years before, a massive iron gate had guarded the entrance to the avenue; but half of it was now clean gone; and the other half, broken off its hinges, was supported by an abutment of loose stones; while a low barrier of similar materials, fenced up the space where the other half had stood; and thus were the grounds, at that side, protected against trespass.

A crumbling wall swept in a curve, at either side of this old gateway; and it was with surprise that the farmer who rented the park discovered, early one morning—so early that it was yet twilight—to one side of it, a hastily constructed and most wretched hut, which certainly had not been there the previous night. A shapeless and unsightly structure, it might indeed be called, being neither round, nor square, nor oblong—a truly unmathematical rhomboid. Its walls, if such an unartificial heaping up of sods, stones, and mud could so

be termed, were not more than three feet high: a few boughs stretched across these, with furze heaped over them, formed its roof; and some furze still, with one or two bundles of straw, nearly covered up the mouth of the den.

On a large stone, placed before this suddenly built hut, the farmer discovered part of a delft plate, having one halfpenny as nearly as possible in the middle of it; and this denoted that charity was expected, from the passers-by; while on another stone sat an individual whom the farmer could not, in his own mind, call either man or boy.

By his height, and his beardless chin, he seemed indeed to be a boy; but then his surly brow, his scowling eye, his dogged mouth, the absence of boyish plumpness in his cheeks, his long and muscular arms, his broad chest and shoulders, together with the shape of his tattered attire, appeared on the contrary to characterize him as a man.

Such huts, as this described, wherein the

wandering mendicant, suddenly seized with fever, or otherwise assailed by disease, so as to hinder him from proceeding on his way, stretches himself, until he either gets better or dies—may often be met with on an Irish road-side; and they are generally erected by the neighbouring peasantry to guard against the introduction of contagious illness into their crowded families. And no one knew this better than the honest farmer at present before us. But here was a wigwam constructed in one night—by whom? No hands in the neighbourhood had, to his knowledge, been employed in the work, and indeed none could have been, without his becoming acquainted with the fact. Was the strange looking guardian of the den its sole architect and builder? Our friend grew very uncomfortable, as he took a second glance at him and it. In the whole expression of the nondescript creature, seated on the second large stone, there was something, indeed, unnatural and impish; and in the

grey dimness, of the early and lonesome morning, the rude, mishapen hut, seemed only like the apparition of one, which he might have called up, as he would a mushroom, almost in an instant, from the earth, but which, supposing it of earthly material—his hands—were they human hands—could never have begun and finished, in the course of a single night.

The farmer took heart, however, to address his new acquaintance, who, in most morose tones, gave him to understand that he was certainly the sole workman, engaged in the building of the rude hospital; and, moreover, that his old grandfather now lay within it, in a raging fever, as could plainly be seen, and known, by any one, who would come close, and look in.

The enquirer, gaining more courage, did approach nearer, and heard moans, and incoherent ravings; and, when afterwards talking over the matter, with his neighbours, he added, that through the small aperture of the kennel, not blocked up, by furze and straw, the wildest

eyes, and the most frightful face he had ever seen, had once or twice glared up, and been turned towards him.

But his neighbours, and indeed himself afterwards, attributed to the influence of fever, the expression of those eyes, and of that face; and general compassion for the afflicted and aged man, was felt throughout the neighbourhood, under the influence of which, he was supplied with every aid and nourishment, that rustic sympathy and skill could afford, or prescribe.

Neither was his unamiable nurse neglected; being furnished with such humble fare as the peasantry could bestow. But, as to nightly lodging, it was generally believed and feared, that boy or man, whichever he might be, he used to pass his nights, quite independently, in some corner of the ruined mansion, in which the farmer's stout steward had refused to take up his quarters.

Although the people of the vicinity, thus

exercised their charity towards the occupant of the uncouth hut, and his grandson, there arose amongst them, however, after a while, whispers, by no means favourable, either to the one or to the other, and of a nature, that inspired a vague dread of both. For it became noticed, that the self-called grandson, was by no means diligent in his attendance on his patient; that for the greater portion of a day, he was not to be seen near him; nay, that for three or four days together, he had been away, no one knew where. The contrast between his youthful appearance, and the expression of his features: his manners and habits, so little in accordance with boyhood, or even with humanity; his thanklessness for favours; and his piggish answers, to all who spoke to him; next told against the mysterious new comer. He had, besides, severely and viciously hurt two children, while at their play, in the fields; and as a climax to his abominable practices, a little anecdote must be related.

A favourite brood hen, belonging to one of the adjacent cottagers, became missing. When looked after, it was found suspended by the neck, from the bough of a tree, quite dead—very well hung, in fact—and the dark browed boy-man, with his arms folded, was, at the same time, observed seriously contemplating it. When questioned on the subject, he deigned to assume a devilish grin, while he answered—

"I wanted to see the way a fellow would die, whin he'd be hanged on the gallows."

"Lord save us, an' keep us!" said the woman, whose pet hen had suffered under the young philosopher's experiment;—"an' why did you want to know that?"

"Fur a rason I have; tell me this; if I knocked your brains out, wid this stone, wouldn't I be hanged?"

The woman pressed her thumb hard against her forehead, repeatedly making the sign of the cross, as she retreated, without asking another question.

Then, as to the sick person, whom he called grandfather. This individual, in a little time, began occasionally to be seen, near the mouth of his wigwam, on all fours, as if he could not better support himself, or was not yet sufficiently recovered, to stand upright. But there was some doubt, about this fact, of his continued incapacity for locomotion. One person positively asserted, that while engaged, in the middle of the night, watching for a dog that had committed depredations on the sheep, in the neighbouring park, he had seen pass very near him, in his ambush, a figure, with long grey hair, floating about its shoulders, hobbling away, in the direction of the ruined house—but hobbling with great rapidity, however; and, although the night was very still, no sound came from the footfall of the figure. The startled watchman shouted out; the figure turned its head; and now he could almost swear, that he beheld in the clear moonshine, the fearful eyes, which that very day had

glared upwards at him, from the interior of the sick man's hospital. But a noise, as if from the dog, for which he was on the watch, here made him look in another direction, and when he again would have studied the questionable apparition, no one appeared in view.

The man hastily gave up his watching post, and crossing the park, made his way down the avenue, to the hut outside its ruined gate. At a glance, he became assured that its disagreeable guardian was not visible ; but this was nothing to the purpose. He drew close to the curious structure ; heard the usual moans and lamentations issue from it ; peered closely into it, and saw the sick man himself, lying stretched on his straw, quite alone, and seemingly helpless. He called out — and again the frightful eyes met his. He hurried homewards, stricken to the heart, with terror.

But after all, there was no witchcraft, nor goblinism in the matter. He had really and

truly seen Robin Costigan, shuffling rapidly towards the old mansion, and he had also really seen Robin Costigan, lying on his back, in his den, outside the avenue gate.

And as soon as Robin judged himself free from further observation, shrewdly concluding that no more questions would that night be asked of him, he protruded, at first, part of his body, from the opening of his lair, and then crept out, inch by inch, on his hands and knees. Thus he remained for some time, turning his head from side to side. All was safe, he at length concluded. He then crawled to the low crumbling wall, that swept round from the gateway, and scrambling over it, like an old ferret, and squatting down at its inside, again looked and listened, all round him. Still, nothing was to be apprehended. At a few steps distant, a tangled and forsaken shrubbery, which however, to any one who could or would thread it, formed a short cut, to the point where he had encountered the dog

watcher, now invited his further progress. Darting into this, he made way through it, with a skill that showed he was no stranger to its difficulties. In a few minutes it delivered him almost into contact with the ruined house.

Turning to the rear of the building, he got into it through the almost open space of one of the kitchen range of windows, and proceeded along an arched stone passage. It was pitch dark, but he knew his way, and did not hesitate for an instant. He entered the cellarage of the house; traversed it, and arrived at another passage, which apparently terminated all the under regions of the edifice. But this did not satisfy Robin Costigan. Standing over a certain spot, he struck his stick, in a measured kind of way, against the floor; paused, repeated the same signal; and presently, close by where he stood, a square flag seemed gradually to raise itself up — the circumstance becoming observable

from a dim red light, which broke through the orifice it had concealed. The old beggar-man then descended a few stone steps, and continued through an apartment — dripping overhead with damp — to a more distant vault. Here, two smithy-looking men, were busy at a small furnace, or occasionally near to it. Costigan joined them, and, immediately afterwards, the hen's hangman added himself to the party — the same individual who had raised the trap door, to admit Robin into the secret manufactory. It may here be noticed, that the contrivance of this trap-door was not as old as the building of the mansion; and that it had been devised and constructed by Robin and his friends, in order to give any chance passenger, on a level with it above, the idea, that there indeed terminated the under vaults of the house.

" Well, ould Darby the divil," said one of the men—the scoundrel was known to his present associates, only as Darby Cooney—" well, ould

Darby the divil, you're bravely to-night; the favor isn't goin' through you very intirely."

"Will ye ever be finished with this job," growled Darby, by way of answer.

"This is the last cast," replied another.

"We're finishin' off the last cast; do you think these u'll stand the jingle, Darby? Here, you black-muzzled gallows bird; show these to him."

Darby's nurse brought for inspection to his patient, a large pewter dish, full of five-penny and ten-penny pieces, and half crowns. Darby scrutinized them very closely.

"They'll do," was his laconic comment.

"If they wasn't the right sort, we'd hear of it," remarked the first man who had spoken.

"I don't like botchery, Paul Finnigan, nor I don't like prate. Fire to you, sowl an' body, you curmudgeon! Will you take care ov yourself, will you?"

The first part of this discourse, was a reply to Paul Finnigan's familiarity, the second ac-

companied with a blow of his cudgel, was addressed to his tender young nurse, who had stumbled, and nearly upset the dish of base coin, which he was bearing back to the artists.

"You're a little cross to-night, Darby the divil," said the other man—and he, indeed, was an artist in his way, and presumed on his cleverness.

"Let me hear none of your gab neither, Molocth,* rebuked Darby, growlingly, "will you finish the cast to-night, that's the question?"

"Out an' out, by the hokey poker," replied Molocth.

"Plase God an' we will," assented Finnigan, "'twould be the divil's own quare play, to be here any longer."

"We'll cut to Connaught agen," was the suggestion of the grandson of the sick man of the hut.

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* The wicked.

" An' 'tis high time for ye to be done," resumed Darby, " a fellow might as well be in one of their blackest cells, as in that cursed pig-sty. My ould bones is knotted together, lyin' in id."

" Bee this holy file," said Molocth, raising one of the implements of his art, " 'twas a bright thought in you, Darby the divil, my darlin'."

" I was afeard that young jade of an informer 'ud bring the spies on us—an' if they came this way, I could give ye warning—that's the whole of id; you know I kep ye together, these many years, while others war thrapped like rats," was Darby's reply.

" There isn't a betther watchdog, nor a betther headpiece, wid the life in his carcase, this night," complimented Molocth.

" Hogh! You're sure you'll be all ready to start before day-dawn? That's the talk;" continued Darby authoritatively.

" 'Tis a'most day already," he was answered.

"I'll be on the thramp afore ye—ye know where we are bound for at present, and where we're to meet together agen."

"To a place, twenty-five good miles from this, by the hokey pokey."

"'Tis a wondher that the whishkey let ye remimber id. Ye must be there, as the dark comes on, to-morrow night week. May-be I'd want your help. May-be the Babby an' myself could manage the job."

"Bee this holy saw," said Molocth, ceasing the motion of a very small one, with which he was finishing the edges of some halfcrown pieces—and as he spoke he looked fully, from beneath his bent brows, into the malignant—the hellish eyes of the old beggarman. "Bee this holy saw, Darby the divil, I'd a'most lay down my own life to stop that business—faugh! 'Twill be a sorrowful job to spill the blood o' the little crature."

"What's that you say?" asked Darby, in a slow, inward voice.

" I done bad jobs in my lifetime, bud I don't like this one. She was so comely, when she was very young an' small, that 'twas like the sunshine to my eyes to look on her; an' she wouldn't harm the wing ov a fly, herself—poor, poor thing!"

Darby Cooney rose up from a large stone, on which he had been seated: half limping, half running, he passed Molocth, and bending his head forward, glanced searchingly into the face of the other man, Finnigan. In evident alarm Finnigan stopt working.

" An' what do *you* say?" queried Darby.

" Faith, an' I hardly know what to say."

Darby Cooney very slowly altered his position; stepping a few paces back, he stood firmly on his outspread legs, and propped himself with both hands, upon his stick. The two men quailed before his regards. The Babby—we give him his new appellation—came close to his side, and folding his arms hard, contemplated his old preceptor, with the same steady

and studious look he had worn, when watching the death throes of the gibbeted hen. A pin could be heard to fall, where, just before, there had been a din of rasping, and hammering, and sawing.

"Do ye remimber the oath that ye took, and that I took, and that she took, as well as the rest ov us? Answer me to that question. Do ye remimber it? Paul Finnigan, do *you* remimber it? Dinnis Keegan, do *you* remimber it?" Each of the men answered his question affirmatively.

"An' the oath was, that death, by the hands ov the rest ov us, was to fall upon any thraitor or informer among us, wasn't that the oath—wasn't it? Answer to me again—wasn't it?"

This question also was assented to.

"An' isn't she a thraitor, an' an informer—isn't she? Isn't she?"

"If she was a thraitor," answered Molocth, alias Dinnis Keegan, speaking, however, in a wavering tone; "if she was a thraitor, the

spies would be on us by this time; I don't think she is a thraitor, poor young crature."

"Bee the black divil, bud she is, Dinnis Keegan. Didn't she sell my life, ay, my own life? Didn't she put the cord upon me? Didn't she bid him to hould me fast, an' to keep me fast? Aye, aye—she did; and since I cum here, wasn't she a thraitor to every one ov ye? While I was in that place abroad, didn't I send the Babby to watch her? Tell him what you found out, Babby."

"I hard her tellin' th'ould woman every thing she knew; I was listenin' to her wid my ears, an' I was lookin' at her wid my eyes," imperturbably answered the Babby.

"Isn't she a thraitor thin? Isn't she, isn't she?" demanded Darby Cooney, in a grim and deadly triumph; "and though fur the last nine months or more, she was left to herself, an' had her own way, musn't she be talked to at last—musn't she?"

The imperfect jury were obliged to admit

the crime committed against their fraternity. "Poor young sowl!" sighed Molocth, as he gave in his unwilling verdict, "poor young sowl! 'tis all over wid her."

"To-morrow evening week then, you promise to meet me at the close of the day; do ye promise? do ye?"

The men gave the promise required; Molocth stipulating however, "if you don't want us very much intirely, we'd like not to put our hands to the work."

"I tould ye before," replied Darby Cooney, "that if the Babby an' myself can do id, we won't ax your help; bud be near us, at yer peril—aye, at yer peril. Ye know I have other hands to work fur me; an' take care, how ye put me to id, or ye'll rue the day. Meet me afther the night fall, to-morrow evenin' week—ye know where—an' I say agen, at yer peril."

Darby Cooney's features quivered spasmodically, and even his head, had a momentary

shaking fit, as he held up his stick to eke out his threats. Without another word, he then hastily limped out of the workshop, silently and gravely attended by the Babby.

The next morning, the people of the neighbourhood found the materials of the temporary hospital, near the gateway of the avenue, scattered about in every direction.

CHAPTER III.

The bridal party proceeded homewards from Father Connell's house; and a strange bridal party it was. Scarce a word was interchanged between the three persons of whom it was composed. And their silence was not of that nature which is the result of an in-felt happiness and content, too great for expression by words; it was the silence of apprehension for the present, and fear for the future; misgivings of having done wrong, and a dread of overtaking punishment.

Edmund shrunk from contemplating to what

he had exposed Helen, should her father discover their clandestine marriage. He trembled too, at the bare thought of what such a discovery must entail on his revered and beloved friend, Father Connell; and his conscience now continually asked him—"have I not been too precipitate, and too selfish, in hurrying Helen into this irrevocable step? Should I not have indeed taken chance for what the probable changes, of two or three days, might bring about?"

He felt his young bride shudder, as she leaned upon his arm. Cheeringly he tried to speak to her, but in vain. The sentences came cold from his lips. She shivered again. Was she so cold? he asked. No, no, she was not at all cold—it was a fine night enough, Helen answered. But still the wretched shuddering recurred. "My father's curse!" was the internal thought which caused it. "I know he will drive me from his door—that will not be

much—but oh! he will curse me too! My dear—and after all, my dearly loved and loving father! And do I not deserve it, even for my unmaidenly and undignified conduct, do I not deserve it?"

Helen did not indeed deserve quite so much; she soon had her punishment however.

The only person of the party who had no fear for the future, was Miss Bessy Lanigan. True it was, she felt in common with Edmund and Helen, a great terror of Gaby Mac Neary; of his public exposure of her amongst her numerous circle of little genteel friends; of his furious anger; of his horrid abuse; almost of his stick. But then, Mr. Q. O. unexpounded! Was there not consolation in the very utterance of his name? They arrived at Miss Lanigan's hall door. Lounging against one of its jambs, his hands in his cuffs, and turning up one eye and one side of his face to the young moon, stood Tom

Naddy. On the arrival of the party, he saluted each in turn, and then, without a word, knocked at the door for them.

"What brings you here?" asked Edmund.

"You have been sent here by my father to summon me home?" demanded Helen, much agitated.

"That's id, sure enough, Miss," answered Tom Naddy composedly, "an' this isn't the first time to-night he sent me either; no, nor the second time: he's like a mad bull intirely, rampagin' about the house, an' cursin', an' swearin', that whin he lays hoult on Miss Lanigan—"

"I vow and protest," interrupted that lady.

"My God!" cried Helen. "Conduct me home at once, Miss Lanigan—or no, upstairs if you please, for an instant. Edmund," she continued, when they had all arrived in the miniature drawing-room — "Edmund, good night—and farewell too—and do not start or gainsay me in what I am going to advise, for

both our sakes. I must appear at once before my father, so that good-night is best said at once—and the word that is made use of, even for a longer parting, must also be said at once; we part, indeed, here—on this very spot, to await, wide asunder, better and happier days, for our re-meeting. You will not I know be selfish enough to tempt an immediate exposure of all that has happened this evening, by accompanying us, or following us to my father's—I know you will not! Nor will you, by your appearance in this town, to-morrow, run the same risk—so, good-night, dear Edmund!—and not a word I pray of you again, for the present; I will write to you, and you will write to me—and in perfect confidence we will consult each other on the best thing to be done, for the terrible future;—dear Edmund, I implore you, if you love me, to comply with my wishes in another respect. Return this moment to your old priest's house—tell him what I recommend you to do, and

see if he will not agree with me—and again and again, good-night, dear Edmund!"

He stood stunned before her, by his great affliction; seeing this, she fell on his neck, and added, in a trembling voice, and with sudden tears—"Dearest Edmund, farewell—dearest, dearest Edmund! My husband—farewell!"

One most tender, and almost despairing embrace, the young pair interchanged; the next moment, Helen had nearly dragged Miss Bessy Lanigan down her own stairs, and out of her own house. Edmund sat alone for some time. At length, he started up, and walked rapidly in the direction of Father Connell's dwelling.

Arrived on the steps, before Gaby Mac Neary's hall door, the ladies, when the door was opened, bid each other good bye; in fact, Miss Bessy Lanigan would not, for the present, face Gaby Mac Neary, if she got a thousand pounds for it, she said; and only leaving her best regards and compliments for him, hurried home, mincing her steps, and pattering along

the streets, as rapidly as a little rheumatic stiffness in her joints enabled her to do.

Helen Mac Neary flew into the parlour, where she knew she should find her father, almost wild with agitation and terror. Without allowing him time to utter a word, she flung herself on her knees, and clasping her hands. cried—

"Dear father, do not be angry with me, and forgive me! neither Miss Lanigan nor I noticed how the evening wore away—but I know I have been out of the house too long—forgive me, oh, forgive me! Never again will I give you cause to be displeased with me, in thought, word, or deed! And am I to go to my own room again, this moment? I will do so willingly father, oh, most willingly!"

Gaby Mac Neary was startled at this inexplicable energy and passion: it was quite disproportioned to the occasion. He looked at her steadily. She was not weeping; but her beautiful face was ghastly, almost haggard; her

eyes were distended, and her shining gold hair was wildly dishevelled. Had she indeed taken such a dislike towards her suitor, Mr. Stanton, that this effect was produced by it? He brought to mind, too, that upon leaving home that evening her step had been heavy, her hands and limbs trembling, her farewells with him hurried and incoherent. Gaby Mac Neary was now more than startled; he was frightened and alarmed for his child. Again he looked studiously at her. Her dry, glittering eyes, as she still knelt, glanced every other moment over her shoulder, towards the open door of the parlour.

"Am I to return to my own room?" she continued, "oh, yes sir,—do, do, let me go!"

"What's all this, Helen?" said Gaby, holding out his hand to her—"get up child—get up out of that, you young jade. Sit on that chair, near me now—there. Blur-an-ages! what's all this about? Tell me at once, you baggage—good child, I mean—don't go

on frightening the life and the liver out of me. Did you see a ghost, or Dicky Stanton?—By Gog alive, there's little difference between one and the other; bring your chair closer to me; closer child, come closer to me."

She obeyed her father's command, but did not utter a word, only shivered through every limb. Gaby felt that the hand he held, was like death's, clammy cold. He put his huge, fat arm, round her little delicate neck; laid her head on his shoulder, and fondled her cheek with his hand, or twisted her golden curls round his finger, and resumed, in a voice exceedingly gentle, for him.—

"Helen, you damned little hussey, don't you know you're the pet of the house, and the mouse of the cupboard—eh? Don't you know that Helen?"

This show of affection, uncouth as it was, she was wholly unprepared for, and it went through her heart. She remained still unable to speak, but turning her head on his shoulder, until her

eyes were hidden in it, she wept and sobbed most miserably.

" Damn the blood of it, girl, don't cry that way, or you'll make as great a fool of me as yourself; there, there now, girl, give over now I tell you," he gave her a father's kiss.

" Oh, dear, dear father," Helen could have said, " do not curse me when you know all;" but she only muttered these words within herself, twining at the same time, her arms around him.

" Blug-a-bouns! girl, you'll put my shoulder out of joint, and I told you you'd make a fool of me," and he shook his head indignantly, but he also shook with the motion two large tears from his eyes, which fell into Helen's bosom; " be damned to it! but I never thought this would happen to me; why, Gog-alive, I'll turn you out of the house, if ever you make a fool of me in this way again, you young baggage."

" Oh, no, no, no, you will not—I am sure you will not—I am sure you never, never will

do that! Promise me, dear father, that you never, never will do that!" she united her hands, and looked with brimming eyes, fully into his.

"Well, I won't poor girl, I won't."

"Never, never, sir!"

"Well, never, never, then, and be damn'd to it."

"God bless you, dear father, God bless you."

"But blug-a-bouns! I don't see what's the matter with you yet, at all, at all," Gaby became grave and contemplative; "oh, aye, I forgot," again he ruminated; "tell me, Helen, hasn't that chip-in-porridge, that Dick Stanton a letter of yours, in answer to one of his, in which you accept him as your lover, and future husband?"

"No, indeed, sir, he has not. On the contrary, sir, he has only a foolish note of mine to him, in ridicule of a long, strange letter which he wrote to me; but instead of that note en-

couraging him, it is a decided refusal of him."

"Blood-an'-thunder-an'-ages! let me see his letter."

Helen quickly ran up stairs for it, returned in an instant, and placed it in her father's hands; he read it over rapidly.

"Oh, Gog's-blug-a-bouns! The sneaking mutton-headed ass! and does he call this riddle-me-ree a love-letter! If I don't twist his long nose for him, the divil may box punch. Oh! ha! Dick Stanton, you were putting your finger in my eye, were you? Oh! tare-an-ages!" And Gaby Mac Neary snatched up his last solitary glass of wine, emptied it in a jerk, and stamped down the empty glass on the table, thereby breaking off its shank. Oh! of all the chaps in Christendom, that harry long legs of a fellow, that's neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red herring—to try to humbug me, in my own house! Oh!" and Gaby flung the broken glass into the fire-place—

"Hah! there's his rap at the hall door—but don't be afraid Helen—hold up your chin, my girl, and look merry—blur-an-ages! 'twas no wonder for you to get the jaundice, which I see you have—at the notion of such a starved spider creeping after you! Get out of the room now for a moment—first give me another kiss, and don't cry any more I tell you—run away now—oh, blood-an-fury! Dicky Stanton, to think he could humbug me to my face! off with you at once, you little baggage, and leave this jockey to me."

As Helen left the room, Gaby Mac Neary flourished his arm over his head. The hall door having been opened, Mr. Stanton's boots creaked across the hall, and entered the parlour. Mr. Stanton had come to supper, on a most express invitation.

"Well, sir! do you want me?" began Gaby Mac Neary.

"Sir—the-a—the-a—" and Mr. Stanton stood and stammered, the picture of surprise.

"The-a—the devil, sir!" continued Gaby, "so, my gentleman, you came into my house to play your asses' thricks on me, did you?"

"Mr. Mac Neary—sir—the-a—I—the-a—really—don't understand you, sir."

"If you don't then, I'll soon make you. You told me you had a letter from Helen, accepting you for her husband?"

"And so I have, sir—the-a—"

"Let me see it this moment!"

"I will, sir; I have it here, sir, lying next to my heart—in the-a—the-a—"

"Well, pull it out of the—the-a, and hand it here to me."

From a pocket on the inside of his waistcoat, made expressly for the treasure, by his own hands, Q. O. unexpounded drew forth the answer to his letter, from G. O. unexpounded. Gaby Mac Neary snatched it from him, and read it twice over.

"And what the devil do you call this hodge-podge? Is this the letter, accepting you as

a husband, that you told me you got from Helen?"

"Yes, sir—the-a—the-a—that is the very letter."

"Phu! phu!"—this expression, or rather sound, of ineffable contempt cannot, we fear, be at all translated; "phu! phu! get out you stupid brute! Oh, Gog-alive! what a purty fellow to come coorting into any man's house! And you had the damn'd assurance to tell me that you had a letter from my daughter, accepting your proposals?"

"And sir, isn't that the-a—"

"No it isn't! No it isn't, you poor, creeping, crawling *ownshuck!* No—but it is a note, refusing you to your teeth, and laughing at you to your face, you poor stuttering animal. Get out of my sight, this moment, and let me never hear your sugar-a-candy boots screeching within my doors again!"

"Mr. Mac Neary—"

"Mr. Tom the divil!—go home, I tell you!"

and Gaby bounced up and seized his stick; Mr. Stanton would have expostulated, but as his late friend strode towards him he prudently retreated, shutting the parlour door between himself and his host, and holding its handle on the outside. Gaby, still threatening and exclaiming, reseated himself by the fire. In a few seconds the door slowly opened again, and Mr. Stanton half entered in.

"Mr. Mac Neary," he began, when whirl and smack went Gaby's stick against his shins: the door was then quickly reclosed, and Mr. Stanton's boots were heard as quickly creaking a retreat out of the house.

Gaby rang the bell. Tom Naddy answered it; and, indeed, this was no great trouble, as he had not been far out of the way.

"Tell Miss Mac Neary to come here, you brat."

Tom shouldered off. Helen soon appeared.

"You needn't be much afraid of that creep-

ing bug-a-bow any longer, Helen; I don't think he'll show his nose here for some time to come. But what the divil is this over again? Why you look as if you wanted to get him back! What's the matter with you now girl?"

"My dear, dear father, I am thankful to you beyond what I can say."

"Why, then, a damned queer way you have of showing it. Why don't you look glad, if you *are* glad?"

My dear good father, don't be angry with me."

"Blood-an-fury-an-ages, girl! I thought you'd be ready to dance cover-the-buckle for joy; havn't you even thanks to offer me?"

"Indeed I am most thankful, sir—"

"And if you are most thankful, why do you look as if you were going to be hanged? Do you want to drive me mad again? Damned well for Stanton to get rid of you, I believe—oh, may the man that tries to do good to a

petticoat, whoever may wear it, or whatever she may be to him—may that fellow be cursed by act of Parliament, I say."

Gaby Mac Neary was stumping off to bed; Helen called out after him, to return, and say God bless her, before they separated for the night. Gruffly enough, he acceded to her request, and then left her alone. She looked round the cheerless parlour, clasped her hands, and whispered shudderingly to herself—"oh, I am punished already—oh, had I but waited one day! And my father has yet to know all!"

Trying to escape from her own thoughts, she also hurried to her bed-chamber. And thus ended Helen's bridal night.

CHAPTER IV.

When Nelly Carty first announced to the beggar girl, under her own roof, among the shower of houses, that she was her mother, Mary felt delighted at the disclosure. The novelty of finding herself claimed as a child by any human creature, was grateful to her previous sense of utter loneliness in the world. The woman's zeal and energy, and indeed success, in saving her from the effects of Darby Cooney's visit, naturally aroused her gratitude also. But Nelly Carty, by telling her that she had yet to make sure of the fact of her parentage,

caused to arise in Mary's mind a doubt, which helped to chill the further growth of these feelings. She afterwards instructed her to conceal, for the present, the whole matter from Father Connell, and the doubt grew stronger.

Mary went to live with Father Connell; and for some time hearing or seeing nothing of Nelly Carty, and gradually becoming inspired with new affections, to say nothing of her dwelling constantly on an old, and an over-mastering one, almost allowed the circumstance to pass out of her thoughts. Time still went by, and she grew indifferent to it; and by degrees, as the improvement of her mental and moral habits progressed, Mary nearly wished that she might never hear any thing more about it. In fact, she now felt a repugnance to being proved to be the child of the unfortunate Nelly Carty. She had had opportunity afforded her, of knowing what good people were, and of being loved and protected by good people, and her misgivings, and her recollec-

tions told her that the potato-beggar was not one of the good.

In about three months, as Mary knelt on an evening, with crowds of other persons, in the dusk of the little chapel, preparing to approach the confessional, she felt her cloak plucked gently by some one who knelt close behind her, and was turning her head, when in a very cautious whisper, almost at her ear, she was thus addressed:—

"Don't stir, or say a word, *ma-colleen-beg*, only listen well to the words you'll hear. I am Nelly Carty, your misfortunate mother: an' I tould you I'd make you an' all the world sure that you were my child; an' ever since you set eyes on me last, sure I was out of this town, far away, roamin' here an' there, to thry an' come across the man, that is the only crature on the face ov the earth can do it; but I couldn't larn tale or tidin's ov him; he's at none of his ould quarthers, widin thirty miles ov us, any how; bud he's off, off, a great

way intirely, this time, fur a rason he has I'm thinkin'. Well, *avourneen*, don't be afeard but that I'll make him out for you, sooner or later; an' until I do, I'll never come an' disturb your pace an' quiet in the priest's house. An' *avoch!* unless it was to see you as my child, that I'd come, to the ould priest's dour, little business I'd have there. I'm not a good woman my *cuishla*, an' th'ould man wouldn't let me next or nigh you; an' I'm kneelin' here to-night, not fur the confession, or fur the prayers, the Lord look down on me an' help me! bud only that I may have this talk wid you, unknownst to him, and to every body. Ah, now the Heavens be wid you, ma-colleen-beg; I'll soon be on the thramp agen, after that man, an' if mortial wit can do id, I'll make you sure, sure, sure."

Mary now heard Nelly Carty arise from her knees behind her, and walk in her heavy, hob-nailed brogues, out of the chapel.

This incident once more disturbed, for a time, the quiet of the beggar-girl's lot; she

feared every day, the return of Nelly Carty, with the full proofs, she seemed so confidently to promise. But time still passed away; and, the potato-beggar not appearing, and Mary being now more and more occupied, and more and more beloved by her new friends, again suffered the matter very seldom to occupy her mind. It was not till the very day of her first communion, that she caught another glance of her self-called mother. Mary was just arising from her knees, before the railings of the altar, when the poor woman appeared, squatted, Turk-wise, among the crowd, straight before her, her hands clasped on her lap, her eyes fixed on her supposed child, and streaming tears, and her lips wide apart—agape in fact, with the great admiration and interest, which will give to the human mouth that expression.

"God bless you *cuishla-machree*," hoarsely whispered Nelly Carty, as Mary made her way through the crowd, to pray prayers of thanksgiving in a secluded corner.

"Amen—an' the same to you, good woman," answered Mary, raising her own moist eyes upward.

The next day, and the next, and the next, Mary again experienced disquietude, anticipating Nelly Carty's appearance at Father Connell's door. But she need not have been so troubled.

A second time the potato-beggar had indeed returned to her town, after a vain search for Robin Costigan. True, she had succeeded in ascertaining that he, and his gang, had recently been hovering about the old mansion, twenty-five miles off; but she had also made sure, that none of them were at present in its neighbourhood, nay, in itself—not even excepting its most secret vaults. And whither Robin Costigan had slipped away, she had no clue to conjecture. Upon the chance that he might be found in Joan Flaherty's hovel, she had come back to the shower of houses, though

not to her own old tenement. She was still at fault.

But an occurrence, totally unconnected with him, now absorbed her whole mind and soul. She heard of Edmund Fennell's re-appearance, from Dublin, in his native city. Her heart misgave her, as to the cause of this event. She learned that he endeavoured to remain in secret, as much as possible. She watched him closely; she dogged him, and the rest of the bridal party, to Father Connell's door; through all their disguise, recognized who his companions were—and upon this discovery, though the woman had no reason to suspect the private marriage, arose a further ordeal of trial and punishment for Helen Mac Neary.

Gaby Mac Neary had, for a good portion of the summer, resided with his daughter, in a handsome cottage, about two miles from the town. There was little of architectural beauty or stateliness in the edifice, but it was respect-

able, and very comfortable; and though not surrounded by aristocratic parks or pleasure grounds, still it had it's accompaniments of garden, and orchard, and shrubberies, and groves, and hedge-row lanes; with its handsome lawn, sweeping before it. On particular business, he had been obliged to return to the town, during the days we have last met him there; but on the very morning after Helen's clandestine marriage, finding his business concluded, he returned to what ought to have been his happy country home.

Helen was glad of the change; glad of any thing, that could serve to divert her mind, from serious thinking, of which, for the present at least, she was incapable. Arrived at the little villa, she wandered about, all day long, whenever she could escape from her father, walking fast, in the open air, and scarcely pausing a moment, to rest herself, or look around her. After dinner she was again out, in the fields, or along the green lanes, and

evening—almost night indeed—stole upon her, ere she thought of returning to her father's roof.

It was not a bright night, though there was a moon; for large masses of clouds, with woolly, silvered edges, sailed in quick succession, across the beautiful planet, scarcely ever allowing her to give more than a flash of her magic light, at a time: while only scraps of the deep blue sky were visible, between their interstices. It blew a breezy blast too, and corn-fields were undulating and rustling all around her, and the landrail was creaking, loudly and incessantly, in the late meadow; and the trees were waving to and fro, in the breeze, not violently but gracefully; and watch-dogs began to bark, at every side, and at different distances; while from afar the broken rush of the river, making way, in that direction, over an uneven bed, would have fallen pleasantly upon any ear but her's.

She was hurrying homeward, through one of

the bosheens, or green lanes, just alluded to, when a figure broke through the deep shadow, in which one of its sides was wrapt, and stood on the path a few paces before her.

Helen uttered a little, low scream, turned, and retreated; but the figure advanced quickly upon her, caught her by her dress, and detained her. She now faced round courageously, and confronted a tattered, middle-aged, woman, whose black eyes, flashing in a momentary gleam of the moonlight, fixed upon her's and expressed much vigour and daring.

"You needn't be in the laste afeared ov me, Miss," the woman said, "I come here to meet you, fur your good, an' not fur evil to you; 'twas too free ov me to lay hold on you, I know —by far too free, fur the likes ov me; bud I have words to say that you ought to hearken to: an' if you'll stand an' spake to me I'll take my hand from your coat—will you stand an' spake to me?"

"Who are you?"

"Nothin' more nor less, than an unfortunate beggar, that thramps, on her bare feet, from mornin' until night, to seek the bit an' the sup."

"And what business can you have with me?"

"That's to be tould. Will you stand and spake to me, Miss Helen Mac Neary? 'Twill be useful for you to hear my words. Tell me that you'll stand and spake to me."

"And how comes it that you know me so well?"

"There is few widin twenty miles round, that I don't know, Miss; sure I see everybody, some time or other. But you'll make the promise to me, Miss, an' I'll take away my hand, as I ought to do? Promise me to stand an' spake to me."

"Well, I do promise; and now, say whatever you have to say, good woman."

"Thankee, Miss. But I am not a good woman, Miss; I am far, far from id. I didn't

larn to be good, whin I was young, an' what I didn't larn thin, I didn't care about whin I was ould. I was comely whin I was ov your age, Miss; but 'twould be betther to me, than millions ov money, that I was blind, an' broken-backed, an' fit only to be kicked out ov the way, by every passer-by. An' young cratures have a notion, that beauty will do all an' every thing fur them; bud many a one lives to curse the face, that brings only shame an' sorrow to its wearer; an' I know now, whin 'tis too late, that if there's pace fur a woman, rich or poor, in her ould age, 'tis by keepin' herself frum sin and shame whin she is young; an' whin once a young girl goes wrong, every one she knew afore is hard upon her; an' she is forced to take up wid people worse nor herself; an' she goes on from evil to evil, an' she never raises her head again—never—never." The woman drooped her shoulders for a moment, and groaned.

"And," she resumed, "the poor young crature can laugh an' shout too, afther a time;

but it isn't joyful she is—no—" she looked straight but vaguely before her, as if taking a long retrospect of the sinful and mysterious past—" no, it isn't—joyful she is."

" This is all very shocking," said Helen, deeply affected, " but what can it have to do with me? What is your real business with me?"

" Take care ov yourself, Miss Helen Mac Neary," pursued the woman, not seeming to have noticed the interruption. " You're not sthronger against a sthrong temptation than another wid a handsome face."

" What, woman!"

" And if you havn't already gone asthray, the path that must lead you asthray isn't far frum your feet."

" You are a bold an' an impertinent woman," said Helen, walking fast away, now in the direction of her home.

" No matther about that," answered the stranger, darting after her, and again catching at her

dress. "Hear all I have to say, young lady. I tould you it would be useful to you to listen to me. I never was a wife, an' yet I was a mother. About eighteen years ago, I had a daughter, as beautiful as the sun in May—too beautiful fur such a mother to have. Before her third year, she was stole away frum me. I thought I'd never lay eyes on her agen. Bud I found her since then; an' that christian crature never lived, that is more comely to look at, than she is. You are comely yourself, young lady, but she is beyond you. I thought my ould, wicked heart, was dead an' froze widin' me: bud at the sight of my lost an' found daughter, I felt there was nature in id still; she brought the life, and the love back to id agen. An' I remimber times gone by; I remimber my own misfortunes; an' if any mother ever kep evil away from her child—evil to her body, or evil to her sowl—that evil will I keep frum my child. Aye, by the sky above my head! Aye, an' by Him that is

above the sky! The man or the woman that puts hurt or harm, grief or sorrow, upon my child, must feel bitther vengeance come upon their heads, for the deed. Are you hearkenin' to me, young lady?"

"I am, indeed; but surely, I have never harmed or injured your daughter?"

"You have harmed her, an' you have injured her—though you didn't know you were doin' id. Bud let you know id now, from my mouth; and let the words of my mouth caution you."

"Why, I do not even know your daughter."

"Bud for all that, you are the bittherest foe she has, upon the face of the earth."

"I cannot possibly understand you."

"Thin I'll give you the knowledge, Miss Helen Mac Neary; an' forewarned, forearmed you know. *My colleen, my* child, that is left me, to warm the ould heart widin me—she has the deep love for Edmund Fennell, an' Edmund Fennell has the love for her—aye, aye—you may start

back, an' you may knit your proud young eyebrows at me—bud she loves him, an' he loves her! An' no wondher that he should love *my colleen dhass*—for you couldn't look at her, widout loving her. An' *my* daughter, *my* colleen, sha'n't walk in her mother's road, if that poor, wicked mother can put a bar afore her. Bud you stand between the boy she loves and her, and you must not stand between them. You must not thry to coax Ned Fennell from my *colleen.* Ned Fennell must be my daughter's wedded husband—or my curse, an' my vengeance, will cling to whoever hindhers him! An' do you undherstand me now, my proud young lady?"

During the latter part of this speech, the beggar woman raised her bare arm, high above her head; her tattered mantle had fallen from about her face, allowing her grey hair to be fluttered by the breeze; and again, as if expressly to give effect to her appearance, the

moonlight flashed for an instant upon her features and figure, showing her eyes glittering with anticipated fury, and her teeth clenched in determination.

"You'll stand fur me now, I see," she resumed, "widout houlding you, Miss Mac Neary."

Helen did not hear her, or at least, did not heed her, and made no immediate answer. She stood apart from the woman, vaguely staring at her, her head erect, her features and her whole air stern, for one so young. She dropped her eyes quickly upon the ground, and her face changed into a thoughtful expression, though a stern one still.

"And if this be true," she at first asked herself, "for what have I braved my father's anger and my father's curse? If this be true, on what kind of man have I bestowed my heart's love, and to what kind of man have I vowed a marriage vow? But can it be true?"

Another short pause of thought, and she addressed the potato-beggar.

"Your name is—I forget if you told it me before; but what is your name?"

"Nelly Carty, Miss."

"You live in the town yonder?"

Nelly assented, describing, with some vanity, her independent holding, on Gallows' Green. Helen shuddered for an instant, at the thought of her husband ever forming an improper connexion, with the daughter of such a woman.

"How do you know that Mr. Fennell and your daughter are acquainted in the way you say?"

"How dov I know? Didn't I see them together? Didn't I hear them talking together? Didn't I hear their kiss? An' don't I remimber what the love is between two young people?"

Nelly Carty alluded to the night of the fire, in Nick Mc Grath's house, when Edmund and the beggar girl had an interview in Joan Fla-

herty's hut, which she had imperfectly witnessed over the cross wall of her dwelling.

"And you solemnly assure me of this?"

"I'll swear id afore the priest fur you; an' more betoken, if you go this moment to the same priest that I am now thinkin' of, you'll hear more ov my daughter, Mary Carty."

"What! Does she live under Father Connell's roof?"

"An' she does so," answered Nelly Carty. "Hearkee, Miss. Didn't you happen to come across her, or see her, whin you went there, wid Masther Fennell late yesterday evenin'?"

Helen started, as she recollected the stealthy witness of her marriage, of whom she had caught only a vague glimpse in the darksomeness of the little hall; and she was now shocked and terrified, upon grounds distinct from her apprehensions of Edmund Fennell's unworthiness.

Was the wretched woman before her—

horrible to think! But was the wretched woman before her acquainted, through her daughter, with the deadly secret of her private marriage?

"How do you know," she resumed, "that I was at Father Connell's last night? Did this daughter of your's tell you so?"

"Why, thin, no, Miss Helen Mac Neary, she did not tell me so. She tells me nothin'. She can tell me nothin'. We don't spake a word wid one another. We are not let to speak a word wid one another. The ould priest would not let us; for he has made Mary Carty a good girl, an' he knows well that her mother is not a good woman; an' so he wouldn't let the wicked mother come near the innocent child."

This was a relief. If Helen's rival were so carefully cherished in all good ways by so good a man, as Helen knew Father Connell to be, and protected against this woman, who called herself her mother, how could she be evil or bad? Or how could Edmund Fennell and she

obtain opportunities for such an interview as the potato-beggar reported herself to have witnessed? This was a relief, if it were true. But, on the authority of such a person, was it true? And was anything that had been uttered by that person true? There was a conflicting incoherence in everything she had heard, and yet a plausibility, which irritated Helen.

"Woman," she cried out, after a harrassing pause, "you must belie Mr. Fennell; he cannot be what you would describe him to me."

"An' what is that?" asked the beggar angrily.

"He is not—oh, I know he is not—such a low, base profligate."

"I called the young man by no such name, Miss. Bud I have my fears for the future,"—answered the beggarwoman, again fiercely showing her former energy. "An' I only say what I said afore. Let him or let her that would hindher them frum bein' lawfully married take care what they do."

And this was another blessed relief to Helen. She saw plainly, from the woman's present meaning, that it was impossible her marriage could be known to her. But still her mind was greatly tormented. She paused for another moment, and took her resolution to escape from all her uncertainty; and then said—

"Well. Good-evening; and don't speak loud or hold me by my dress, as you have done before; I am not afraid of you woman—let me go on my way, to my father's house; good night."

"The good night to you thin, Miss; bud though you're not afraid of me, may be you'd hearken to one word more that I have to say to you; may be you'd hear another rason why you ought not to stand in the way, between Neddy Fennell an' Mary Carty. You're goin' home to your father, you say. I'm glad to hear id; fur listen, Miss. Mary Carty is'nt goin' home to her father this night; an' yet, Miss, fur as proud as you stand there afore me,

hearkee to the word more I have to say—the man that is your father is Mary Carty's father."

Helen turned, in utter astonishment, to question the woman; but she had fled. Availing herself of some way, near at hand, of which Helen was ignorant, but with which, she was well acquainted, Nelly Carty had quite disappeared. The lonely girl looked round, in every direction, with a strong impulse to follow her; but, recollecting that her father must now, long have expected her at home, she checked the impulse, and hastened towards the house.

The determination, to which she had come, she soon put into execution, after her arrival at home. Certain, that Edmund Fennell must have complied with her entreaties, on the previous night, to return to Dublin, she now wrote him a short note, directed to his address, in that city:—

"Edmund,

"The instant you receive this, I conjure you by your declared love for me—and what is more—by my sincere love for you—to come back immediately, and remove from my mind, doubts, sprung up, since our parting—the only doubts, which, if you cannot explain them away—must ever make me miserable, at the thought of being

"Your wife."

And this note she gave in charge to Tom Naddy, peremptorily commanding him, to put it in the post office of the town, two miles off, that very night; and indeed, Tom was not faithless to his trust.

Helen sat for some time, with as good a face as she could wear, in her father's presence. Both then retired for the night.

And thus ended the second night, of Helen's honeymoon.

But the punishment of disobedience and indiscretion, was not over.

CHAPTER V.

On re-entering his house, after seeing the young husband and wife, beyond the threshold of his outside door, upon the evening of the unhappy marriage, Father Connell, still very saddened and meditative, again sat down in his little parlour. Mrs. Molloy could hear him sigh, and even groan, very often. His thoughts tried to occupy themselves with the new misfortune—for in his estimation, misfortune it was—that had happened under his roof that evening; namely, the witnessing the marriage of Edmund and Helen, by Mary

Cooney. His displeasure was high against his housekeeper, for having suffered the poor girl to leave her bed room, on the occasion. As to Mary, he feared much from her, on account of the unlucky circumstance. So, he sat a considerable time, revolving what was best to be done, and finally, summoned Mrs. Molloy to his presence.

Mrs. Molloy knew what she was called in for; she also knew, in her heart, of what a dangerous negligence she had been guilty, and was really sorry for the crime; but not quite so much so, as she pretended to be. For she entered the parlour, hanging down her huge head upon her breast, holding upon her forefinger her stiff check apron to her eyes, and uttering the little and broken sobs, which would intimate, the gradual dying away, of a great storm of grief. Not more than twice in her life before, had she deemed it necessary to become so utterly afflicted; indeed, as may be called to mind, it was far from being her usual

method of eluding her master's wrath; at present, however, she feared more than ever she had done, the priest's displeasure, and hence, the very rare occurrence of her self-humiliated, tearful, and contrite air.

At the very first sight of her repentant sorrow, Father Connell, as she had anticipated would be the case, half forgave her her offence. He addressed her, however, very gravely.

"I thought, Mrs. Molloy, I had laid my strict commands on you, to keep that poor child out of the way, during what was going on here, this evening?"

First suffering to escape her, many of the little sniffling sobs, just spoken of, the housekeeper assured the priest, that she thought she had turned the key in the lock, of their bed-room door—for in Mrs. Molloy's sleeping chamber, a little bed had been put up for Mary—but, as it would appear, she really had not done so, and "sure that was her only fault; sure his reverence knew, as well as she did, that no

creature alive could be more careful than she was, ever and always; only that the lock of that misfortunate dour, ever since the day it was nailed on, had a fashion of—"

Father Connell interrupted her,—"Mrs. Molloy, can you tell me, if the poor child fully understood what was going on? or that she had been long enough in the hall to understand it."

Mrs. Molloy was quite sure that she did, and that she had.

"That is unfortunate, Mrs. Molloy, that is very, very unfortunate; very unfortunate for us all, to say nothing of the affliction to herself. Is the poor young thing quieter now, Mrs. Molloy?"

"A little sir. I had the world an' all ov' throuble, tryin' to coax her wid my two arms round her neck, and to pet her, an' to rason wid her afore I could get her to stop cryin', sir."

"And is she in bed yet, Peggy?"

"No, sir."

"Then, Peggy, the best thing you can do I believe, is to send her here to me till I speak a word with her too—don't you think so, Peggy; so go out to her, Peggy, and tell her I want to speak to her, the poor child; and Peggy, as soon as you come back here with her, you needn't stay in the parlour, Peggy; I want to say something to her alone."

The housekeeper accordingly withdrew; returned in a moment with her young charge; ushered her barely inside the parlour door, and closed it on her, shutting herself out.

Mary performed her little drop-curtsey, on the spot where she was, and then stood stock still, her arms hanging by her sides, her head and eyes cast down, her face very pale, and a wretched expression about her compressed lips—the expression of a kind of resigned despair, which, on the features of one so young and so handsome, it was miserable to see.

After gazing a moment at her, the old priest silently held out both his hands to the poor

girl. She caught the motion by a sudden glance upwards; let fall her eyes again on the ground, again made her simple curtsey, and advanced to his side. He closed his hands upon one of hers, and over, and over again, pressed it vigorously.

"Well, well, my child; well, well. It can't be undone now, and I see you are sorry for it; there now, there. It was a very wrong thing indeed to do; in this house, my pet, my business is often of a secret nature, which ought not to be pryed into, or spyed into; but there now, there; I am sure you meant no harm."

He released her hand; she slided without a word, to the back of his old arm-chair, and there remained still. In a little time—"I didn't come to spy, or to pry, sir," she said timidly, and in a whisper.

"And why did you come at all, then, my poor child?"

"To look at him, sir—to look at him, once

agen, an' he such a long, long while away from me; I didn't know what he was in the house, for—och, och, I didn't! Och, if I did sure I could never stay in the house."

"And I believe you, my child, I believe you; I believe that you did not come to pry, or to spy; but it is wrong to talk of not staying in the house, Mary. And tell me, my child. How did you come to learn that Mr. Fennell was here at all?"

"I hard the sound of his voice, sir, into Mrs. Molloy's bedroom, through the hall, an' through the kitchen—an' if twenty halls an' kitchens were between me, an' the sound of his voice, och, wouldn't I hear id? wouldn't I?"

"Well, I am glad to see you so grateful, Mary; it is a very good thing, my child, to be grateful to our benefactors."

"It is, sir; I know it is. Bud, och, sir, there's more than that in id. Afther all that is come an' gone, I love him in the heart yet, sir; och, I do—I do love him in the heart."

"To be sure, my child, to be sure you do; you love him with a grateful love, which is due to the first friend you ever knew; and with a sisterly love, which you felt you owed to him for the brotherly love he promised you, the last time he went to see you on the Green; and also, for his love to you since, in giving me the means, under God, of keeping you in this poor house, Mary; for a poor house it is child, unless when it is helped by a good, rich person like him; and you owe him the love, too, my child, for enabling me to have you here, and make a good christian of you, and a good little girl of you, and to keep you from Darby Cooney; and a good girl you have become, my poor child, a very good girl; and so, all that is right, Mary, right and proper, and like a good christian, and I told you all along, that was the way to love him, my child."

"I know, sir, I know; bud what's the use ov hidin' it frum you, of all the people on the face ov the earth? For all the rasons that you

laid down, sir, I love him, an' I thank him: I don't forget a single thing that ever he done for me, from the very first hour we came across each other. Whin he was the tendher hearted little boy, that shared his own little breakfast wid me, an' I hungry an' wantin' it sorely; an' that pelted down Darby Cooney for me;—och, no, I remimber id all; all that he has done fur me, up to this very day. An' fur all that, I love him, sir, in the way you say; bud, och, sir, over an' above all that, I love him! Och, sir, she was a beautiful crature, an' a grand crature, an' a stately crature, that you married him to here, this evenin'—wasn't she, sir?"

"Hush, Mary! hush, my child. You had no right to know anything of that; and you have no right ever to speak of it, ever, ever to say a word about it. Do you know, Mary, that if that marriage was spoken of, out of this house, he and the poor young lady, that is now

his lawful wife, would thereby suffer great misery."

"No, sir—bud would they?" asked Mary in breathless interest. "Why so, sir? How, sir?"

"It is unnecessary, my poor child, that you should be made acquainted with the reasons, how and why; but I am sure you will believe your old priest's word, when he tells you as much, I am sure you will, Mary; and when he repeats to you, that if the unfortunate marriage you were an eye-witness to this evening, should become known, for the present at least, the world hardly ever saw a more unhappy young pair than your friend Mr. Fennell, and his poor young wife would be; oh, yes, my child, a betrayal of that secret, would indeed make them very, very wretched. And you take my word for it now, Mary? You take my word for it, my good girl?"

"I do, I do, sir," she replied, in a trembling

voice. "I do, I do, sir—the poor young cratures! An' is that the way that the sorrow comes upon them in their early days? An' is that all that the love can do for them? Bud, sir," she went on, after a moment's pause, "sure there's one comfort for them, any how. Sure their sacret can never be broke through, sir—never, never, sir. There's only one that you could have a fear ov breakin' through id, sir—an' sure she's too good a woman, an' she loves an' she fears God an' you, sir, too well to do id—isn't she, sir? Doesn't she, sir?" demanded poor Mary, now very eagerly.

Father Connell was suddenly and deeply affected. It was plain to him that so remotely did she put herself out of the question of betrayal of the secret, Mary did not even dream that any one could suspect her of the act. And now he would not proceed a step farther, to blow a doubt of herself over the unsullied mirror of her own mind. Besides, it would have been unnecessary to do

so. Perfectly and thoroughly satisfied he was that Edmund Fennell's secret marriage would never be divulged to a human being by Mary Cooney.

And yet, he asked himself, is there not some human temptation to make her act differently? Would every one feel as free as this poor child does, on the occasion, of jealousy, and the sins it whispers us to commit? He put back his hand to her, over his chair; she laid hers in it, and he continued aloud:—

"Now, may the Lord bless you, my child;" but recollecting that he must answer her questions as to Mrs. Molloy's trustworthiness, he added—"No, no, my child; I have the fullest faith in Mrs. Molloy, and I put my entire confidence in her. No, no, my child, you are right, very right. She wouldn't do such a thing, I do believe, for the whole wide world."

"Thank God!" said Mary, heaving a long, long sigh, but not a very unhappy one.

"And now, come round here, to me, my

good child, and my very good child, for your to-night's blessing."

She did so, meekly and gracefully, kneeling on one knee, and bowing her forehead, on her small clasped hands. The priest raised one of his, a little above her head, and prayed down, in a more lengthened prayer than usual, the blessing, and the grace, and the help of her God, upon the young sufferer.

" And now again, Mary, I have one word to say to you, before yon go to bed; you are getting very lazy, Mary my child—oh ay, you may stare at me, with your mouth wide open —but I tell you you are, Mary;" the old man laughed; " there's the flower-bed, at the right hand side of the summer-house, and I saw two weeds in it to-day; worse than that; there's my grand new surplice, that I would let no one but yourself put the nice work on—and it's not finished yet. And Mick Dempsey tells me, that he was obliged to take back the last book he lent you—the wonderful life and history of

Robinson Crusoe, he says—because you read it too often, and didn't pay attention enough to your lessons for him. And now, you are a lazy little Mary—aren't you? So, go along to your bed now, you little hussey, and if ever I have to make a complaint of you again, or if ever I hear a complaint of you again, I'll—oh, you can't think how I'll punish you Mary." He shook and pressed her hand, and to the affectionate and benign expression that broke through laughter, from his old handsome blue eyes, Mary, before she left the parlour, smiled respondingly, with a relieved heart; and she had scarcely gone, when a loud and quick knocking sounded at the outer door of his little premises. His mind misgiving him as to whom the late visitor might be, he hastened in answer to the summons, himself. His misgiving was right. It was Edmund Fennell, who came to consult with him upon Helen's advice and entreaties, that he should return immediately to Dublin. Not wishing Edmund again to go into

his house that evening, Father Connell led him into the little garden, and there, walking up and down, they continued their conference. The old priest, pausing often, and asking many questions, at length decided that, under all the circumstances, Helen's advice was a good one, and ought to be followed. Edmund promised to follow it, now coupled as it was with that of his old and most revered friend; in agitated and deep affliction, and in tears, he promised; and so he and Father Connell parted. And he kept his promise.

CHAPTER VI.

The next morning at break of day, Mary Cooney, began to pluck away the two weeds, in the flower bed, to the right hand side of the "summer-house," and after them, a good many more, that, the truth to tell, were to be found throughout the little garden. Then she went into the house, to wash the garden clay from her hands, that she might assist Mrs. Molloy in the discharge of some housewifely duties, which for many months she had been accustomed to undertake. Breakfast followed; then household affairs again; after which, she

made her best attempts at dressing for all day, and finally, taking her work basket, containing the priest's surplice and her lesson books for Mick Dempsey, went out into the little arbour, sat down in it, and began plying her needle, and conning her tasks alternately—indeed, often doing both things together.

The following day, and very nearly at the same hour, she was once more at work and at study, in the willow arbour. It was about three o'clock. Father Connell was out. She heard a loud knocking at the door of the yard, which reverberated through the stillness of the little solitude all around her. She started and looked straight down the garden walk, and through its wooden railing into the yard. A young lady, richly and fashionably dressed, and of noble carriage, Mary thought, and seemingly much interested about something, crossed the yard, from the entrance door, speaking with Mrs. Molloy. Her own maid servant followed her. They stopped before the little gate, in earnest conversation.

Mrs. Molloy pointed up the garden to the arbour: the lady, turning her head in the direction, immediately entered the garden, and advanced rapidly, and alone, towards Mary.

At the first glance Mary recognized Edmund Fennell's wife; and if the poor beggar girl had thought her handsome, and stately, and grand, upon the occasion of her private marriage, when she saw her in neglected attire, and pale, and depressed, and drooping, much, much higher was her present estimate of the personal pretensions of this young lady; for now her eyes were flashing, her cheeks and lips rosy red; her air animated and dignified, though, indeed, with a little dash of hauteur about it; and as to her dress, Mary deemed she had never seen one so costly. To tell the truth, in anticipation of this very visit to Mary, Helen Fennell had put on her very gayest out-of-door finery, and in every respect decorated her person, so as to produce an overawing effect, upon her poor rival.

Her first look at Mary, when half way up the garden path to the little arbour, greatly interested her. She saw a lovely young creature, of about her own age, clad from head to foot in habits of very humble material, but neat and spotless as a quaker's, and withal, fitting Mary elegantly, though not modishly. They were of a cut of Mary's own invention, but Helen thought it worthy of suggesting the fashion to a young countess on her wedding day.

She drew near her, and looked closer. She noticed the flowers at Mary's waist, and the simple one set among her golden ringlets, under the snow-white border of her modest little cap. Again she looked, and still more wistfully; and started back at the likeness of herself, that now appeared before her. She remembered the old beggar woman's words, and believed, indeed, that it was a sister she looked upon.

The two young women stood face to face, together. Mary had arisen, holding her work in her hand, and though she at first trembled a

little, the weakness was soon either controuled by her self possession, or absorbed in the admiration and awe with which she regarded her visitor. She made as profound a curtsey as she knew how to perform, and stood upright and still, her eyes fixed on those of Helen, which, in their turn, after she had saluted Mary more graciously than she thought she should have done, sent back the poor girl's gaze with interest. And thus they remained for some little time, attentively studying each other.

"How do you do, my dear?" Helen began, at length. "Will you allow me to rest myself in this nice little summer house, for a few minutes, until Father Connell comes home?"

Mary grew paler than she had been, at the sound of Helen's voice, but she answered her without stammering, and with a natural ease, and affability, which ought to be called politeness.

"Why I do declare," continued Helen, sitting down, "'tis quite a nice little place

altogether. And who keeps the garden so neatly, my dear—pray isn't your name Mary —Mary Carty I think?"

"Mary Cooney, my lady, kindly at your service."

"May I make so free as to call you Mary?"

"Och ay, an' a thousand times welcome."

"Well, I was going to ask you, who does the work of the garden?"

"We all do id between us, my lady; first, there's an ould lame gardener, that comes to prune the trees, an' to nail them up, an' do the heavy diggin' fur the vegetable beds; an' afther that, the priest himself, an' his housekeeper, an' his boy, an' myself, we do what we can, in turn, my lady."

"And what is your part of the work, Mary?"

"The flowers mostly, my lady."

"Don't call me 'my lady'—don't call me 'my lady,' Mary; 'tis not my title."

"I wont then—*mam.*"

The moment she had uttered the word, "mam," Mary blushed high, in a fear that she had done wrong, in at all giving a clue to her knowledge of the secret marriage; and, at the same moment, Helen winced under the almost certainty that, in making use of the word, Mary held her at her mercy. She did not immediately approach the topic however.

"Well, and what nice needlework are you doing?" She examined it.

"'Tis to be a surplice for the priest," answered Mary.

"And you are reading too—may I look at your book? What is it?" Helen took it up.

"My lessons fur Mister Dempsey, your honour," and now Mary tried to escape the two dilemnas of ignorance of one of Helen's true titles, and a dangerous knowledge of another, in which she had already placed herself.

Helen turned over the leaves of the book: pondered, smiled, and again addressed her new acquaintance.

"But do you know a woman of the name of Carty?—Nelly Carty."

Mary answered that she did.

"And you are nothing to her?"

Mary replied that she had no good reason to know she was.

"But have you *any* reason to know that you are?"

Mary paused, evidently embarrassed. Helen watched her, for the first time, in a doubt of her sincerity. But Mary's hesitation soon cleared up into perfect ingenuousness.

"I *have* a reason to think that I am something to Nelly Carty, your honour; but I was bid not to say anything about it, fur the present time, and that's why I hope you will not ask me any more questions on the head ov it."

Helen looked into her face, and felt that she was telling truth.

"Well, and why did you call me mam, just now, Mary?"

The beggar girl was more puzzled than ever. She changed colour, again and again.

" Tell me Mary, do tell me," persisted Helen.

The beggar girl covered her face, with her hands, and burst out crying.—

" Och, och, an' did'nt I see you married to him, the night before the last!"

" Well, Mary ; and if you did, do you know that his dearest happiness and mine, are in your keeping? Do you know that if you told any one that you saw us married, he and I would be destroyed for ever? And could you betray the secret Mary? Could you?"

The poor girl started up, flashing almost anger, from her serene blue eyes, as she answered—

" May God forgive you now, Mrs. Edmund Fennell," she said—" an' its little you know the heart that's in the body of poor Mary Cooney, if ever you thought that she could harm a hair of the head of Edmund Fennell,

or the hair of the head of any one that's his! Och, may God forgive you."

Helen, shedding some answering tears, to those which gushed from Mary's eyes, soothed her, and assured her, that she thought no such thing, and never, never, would she think such a thing.

"But you loved him?" whispered Helen, after some time.

"I did love him; an' I do love him, in the very heart; bud that's not the rason why I should do him hurt or harm," answered Mary. There was another pause between them.

"How long ago is it, since you first met?"

"'Tis about six, or seven, or eight years."

"And how often did you meet since, Mary?"

"Five times intirely—barrin' the night afore the last."

"But," continued Helen, looking round her, and dropping her voice still lower, while she recollected part of Nelly Carty's communications of the night before—and she blushed

deeply, ere she spoke further—" there were kisses, Mary,—kisses of the lips—he used to kiss your lips—and you used to kiss his lips—during those meetings?"

" He never kissed my lips," answered Mary, sighing deeply. " I remimber that well; bud I kissed his lips, three times, in my whole life: an' I never felt his kiss in return."

Helen again looked at her, in utter amazement, though in perfect trustfulness. Her further questions led to a full disclosure of Mary's acquaintance with Edmund Fennell—the old story—since they first became acquainted, boy and girl, almost child and child together; and how Edmund took her away from Darby Cooney, and saved her from him, and gave the priest money, to save her from him; and how she had lived, now nearly a year, under the priest's roof, comfortable and happy. Helen listened to her, in, if possible, increased wonder and admiration, and also with reflections that made Edmund Fennell dearer

than ever to her heart. She took the still weeping Mary by the hands; she put her head upon her shoulder, upon her bosom; and she told her, over and over again, that henceforward she should be her dear friend and her sister, and that her home, and Mary's home, should be the same, the moment she had one to offer her. Mary thanked her, often and fervently; and the two young rivals thus parted: each loving the other.

CHAPTER VII.

Almost immediately after her interview with Nelly Carty, Helen, as may be remembered, wrote a letter, calling her husband from Dublin, merely upon information derived from a very disreputable source, that he was, or had been unfaithful to her, by professing to love another. This was an impetuous step, and before Helen retired to bed that night, she felt that it was. And now, she grew impatient with herself for having been impatient, and resolved to govern herself better for the future.

The following morning, her first reflection

was, that Edmund had been foully belied, and Helen would no longer entertain the shade of a doubt of him. But the next moment, she fastened with avidity upon the thought that Edmund would be sure to be at her side that evening, and by his denials, and his disproofs of the strange woman's assertions, set her heart quite at rest; and this showed that Helen still doubted, notwithstanding that she had told herself she did not. At all events, she resolved and re-resolved, to bear the wearing away of the long long day before her, quietly and patiently.

About half an hour afterwards a little imp, buzzed passingly in her ear, that it would be a good thing to go see and speak with her formidable rival; and without awaiting her husband's appearance, ascertain from herself, in what relations Edmund and she stood towards each other. But at first Helen would not attend to the little imp's hint, courageously resolving and striving to put it out of her head.

He came back on the wing very soon, and renewed it close at her ear; Helen wavered—and again—and Helen went to see Mary Cooney.

Perhaps the little imp should not have been called a little imp, for after all, there was nothing very mischievous in his suggestion. Certainly, compared with the floundering fellow, who advised Helen to write the letter to Dublin, this was a little angel of wisdom.

Helen returned home, from her visit to the beggar girl, in Father Connell's garden, much, much happier than before she had made it. And now she was sorry indeed for having written to Edmund Fennell. The remainder of the day passed on, and the greater portion of the evening, and she became again more impatient than ever. But her maid came in, upon some pretence, to the parlour, where she was sitting with her father, and gave a secret signal to Helen, which she was authorised to do by virtue of as secret a whisper, interspersed

with a bar or two of whistling, received from Tom Naddy, and Helen's heart beat thick and fast. And in fact, having obtained permission from her father to go out of doors a moment, and run round and round the house to enjoy the moonlight, Helen boundingly issued forth, and in a secret place, met her bridegroom husband.

Every thing necessary for an explanation was said on both sides, and Helen's heart became indeed perfectly relieved of any doubt of Edmund Fennell. In his conduct towards poor Mary Cooney, she now saw nothing that was not pure, generous, and noble. They were lingering out their interview, when an unseen person, knowingly cried "hem!" very near them.

"That's your maid," said Edmund.

"And she is come to inform me, that my father grows impatient of my absence from the house," whispered Helen, "so good night, dearest Edmund! And that sad word—fare-

well too! Forgive my precipitancy in calling you here from Dublin—but you will go back again to-morrow morning at least."

Edmund interrupting her, pleaded very hard for one interview more the next evening, after which he would instantly—instantly return to Dublin; and Helen need not fear that it should be known he was in the town so near at hand: he would conceal himself all the following day in private lodgings; and Edmund was interrupted in his turn, by a bellow from one of the windows of the house, embodying these words:—

"Helen! Helen! Where the devil are you, you baggage? Come in this moment out of the night air, wherever you are! Do you want to get the quinzy or the rheumatism, before your time, you young hussey? Come in, I say, and let me and the moon go to bed, or let her go to the devil if she likes." The young couple could interchange but few words more; but still Edmund pressed his request; and

Helen granted it. And the next night Edmund did come to see his young bride; but he saw her not.

Early in the morning Gaby Mac Neary rode to the town, to attend the grand jury assizes, the circuit judge having arrived the previous day.

It was late when he was on the road homewards, as he had dined with certain of Dick Wresham's scholars, and the evening sitting had been very convivial. In fact, night had already began to fall.

It did not suit Gaby Mac Neary's habit of body to have it shaken violently, when he rode abroad, so that he now allowed his quiet horse quietly to walk along, picking his steps, in slow progress towards his stable door. Gaby's heavy oaken cudgel was over his shoulder. He had cleared the suburbs about a mile, when the animal he bestrode suddenly stopped, and seemed to wonder very much at something to one side of the road, a few paces in advance:

but this was no skittishness on the part of the beast: it was, in fact, just what it has been called, excessive wonder, mixed up, indeed, with grave enquiry. So, he looked, and looked, and having at length decided in his own mind that the object was only a potato-beggar, squatted on her bag, filled with the produce of her day's begging, he soberly proceeded on his journey.

Gaby Mac Neary had, like his horse, been studiously observing the figure, and arrived, with him, at the same decision concerning it. Horse and master went on a few paces. The person stood up, deliberately walked into the centre of the way, and, as deliberately took hold of the bridle of the former. Again the animal stood still.

"Who the devil are you? And what do you want?" questioned Gaby Mac Neary, unshouldering his cudgel and clutching it firmly.

"You ought to know me well enough, Masther Gaby," answered the woman.

"What, you ould bundle of nastiness! Why

the devil should I know who you are, or anything about you?"

"An' yet, I tell you again, you ought to know me well enough," she repeated.

"Yes—aye—now I guess. Oh Gog, you rap! And havn't you the assurance of the mother of Beelzebub herself to come across my road, and stop my horse and me, in this manner? Let the bridle go, or I'll break this cudgel lamb-basting you!"

"It is sixteen years now, Masther Gaby, sence I opened my lips to you afore."

"And let it be seventy-six before you do it again, I advise you;—take away your hand, I tell you!" he made a blow at her knuckles, but missed them, nearly losing his own balance, in the saddle, at the same time.

"Masther Gaby, that beautiful little child—"

"Ha! Blur-an-fury! And you begin to talk of that now? You jade! Didn't I support the child, and you too, right well? Didn't I love the poor little creature? Didn't I promise,

and didn't I intend to provide well for it? And didn't you make away with the innocent child? You did, you faggot!—you did, you unnatural brute, you did!"

"No, Masther Gaby; the child was stole frum me."

"The child was murthered you mean! Murthered by its own mother! You Jezebel! I know it was! I'd swear it was! Leave my path! Quit my sight! Sixteeen years ago, I cautioned you never to cross my path again if you didn't want to be seized upon, and hanged, for the murther of that poor infant!"

"I remimber your words well, Masther Gaby; an' frum that day to this, I never cum next or near you; bud it wasn't the fear of death that kep me away; it was, because I couldn't look in the father's face, widout thinkin' of my beautiful darlin', that was taken frum me."

"Let go my bridle, or I'll ride over you!"

"Masther Gaby, many days wont pass, until I'll prove to you, that I didn't murther my own

child; an' enough said now, Masther Gaby, until that time comes about; bud I have a few more words to spake to you. You have another daughter—Masther Gaby, look well to your lawful daughther, or you'll lose her."

"What's that you say, you ould hell-hound? What's that you say?"

"I tell you," replied she, now letting go the horse's bridle, and stepping a little to one side of the road, while her voice lost its submissiveness, and became daring. "I tell you, Masther Gaby, that if you don't guard Miss Helen Mac Neary, like a jailor, you'll lose her."

"Curses on your bones! What do you mean?"

"I tell you that you'll lose her, if you don't guard her well; them were my words; an' I tell you now, into the bargain, that if you don't guard her well, she'll be very likely to take the road that I took, whin I was a *colleen*, about her very age at present."

"Oh, you screechowl! Oh, you damn'd liar!" and Gaby thumped his horse's sides with his heels, while he also smote them with his heavy stick, turning the animal's head towards Nelly Carty—"Oh, by the big Gog, I'll charge through you, you soothsayer! Oh, you prognosticater!"

"Let your horse stand where it is," she exclaimed. "It's fitther fur you listen to all I have to say, than fly into that passion, an' curse down curses, that's enough to make the sky fall an' cover us; there, your poor horse has more sense nor yourself; see, he won't stir a step to hurt me. Listen now. What I'm going to say, is as thrue as that I'm spakin, an' that you are there to hearken to me. Last night, your daughter—Miss Helen Mac Neary, I mane—held a lonely meeting, outside ov your house, in the counthry, wid a young man, you know well—Ned Fennell by name—"

"You are a liar!" roared Gaby Mac Neary —"a liar! a liar!"

"I am not a liar—I spake the blessed thruth —she met him last night, in the little shrubbery; at the left side of the house—an' his arms war round your daughther—an' wid a kiss they met each other—an' with a kiss they parted from each other—aye—aye—roar out at me again if you like—bud all this is thrue—you thought he was in Dublin, far away frum her—but that's the way they desave you."

"Nelly Carty, I will not roar out at you now." Gaby Mac Neary's voice, and Gaby Mac Neary's self, trembled as he spoke.

"How did you come to know all this?"

"I watched them. I watched them close, close—I seen them wid my livin' eyes, in the shrubbery together;—watch your daughther yourself, as close as I did, an' your own eyes 'ill witness for you."

Gaby Mac Neary sat for an instant silent and motionless in his saddle. The furious

working of his nerves were not at all events visible to the eye of Nelly Carty.

"An' I have a little more to tell you," she resumed.

"Well, go on."

"Sure, he's to meet her agen, this very night, an' in the very same place."

"And how do you know that too?"

"I hard 'em settlin' it, wid ache other."

"Very good," said Gaby Mac Neary.

At this period of the conference, a man with a wallet on his back, hobbled up the road, and passed very close to Nelly Carty; a something like a boy, trotted at his heels. The potato beggar started, peered after him for an instant, flew after him the next, seized him by the shoulders, turned him suddenly round, and stared into his very eyes.

"Help! give help here!" she cried, in frantic accents. "Help, Masther Gaby! I hould the man, that stole the child, sixteen

years agone—an' that's come back here now, to kill her, kill her! I know id, I know id! Nothing else brings him back.—Help, help! to hould the murtherer!"

Robin Costigan exerted all his remaining strength to free himself, bud his old friend held him firmly. Gaby Mac Neary, overwhelmed as he was, by the tidings he had just heard, did not attend to Nelly's call. Impatient to be at home, that he might confront his daughter, he cudgelled his sober horse, until the poor animal's sides resounded under his blows. But the Babby, who for a moment had been only an observant looker on, sprang to the assistance of his revered tutor. Seizing the arms of the beggar woman from behind, while Robin Costigan still struggled his best with her in front, the vulture gripe of her fingers was soon loosed, while, at the same instant, her youthful assaulter adroitly tripped up her heels, and then dragged and flung her into a ditch, half filled with

water, by the road side. Before she could recover herself and contrive to scramble and splash out of it, the old robber had wound himself through a contiguous fence into the neighbouring fields, and, closely followed by his helper, hobbled, with marvellous speed, in the direction of the river, which flowed through the valley, below the road, at some little distance from him.

Nelly Carty gazed around her, in every direction, still feeling somewhat stunned and stupified from her late harsh treatment. Robin Costigan was nowhere to be seen. Gaby Mac Neary was also out of view. She held her head tightly between her hands, as if her thoughts were material, and that she could thereby compress them.

"Aye, aye," she despairingly muttered, "he is come back here, sure enough, to shed the blood of my own beautiful darlin'! Bud I'll stop his murthering hand if there's a one born can do id!" And abandoning the potato bag,

which that day had cost her so much toil and trouble, she raced along the road, in the direction of the town.

"I'll be there afore him," she continued constantly to mutter, "I'll be there afore him, or death will sthrike me into a could hape on my road there!"

Not an instant did she slacken her great speed, until she arrived in the suburbs of the town, and stood before Father Connell's residence. The entrance door being open she rushed into the little yard, screaming out for her daughter—"Mary Carty, her daughther! Mary Carty, her own *colleen beg*, her own beautiful darlin'! her own *chorra-ma-chree!*"

The house door was also open, and, her screams increasing, she broke into the quiet dwelling. Father Connell met her in the passage. She was not disrespectful to him—but she called on him to produce her child, and place her before her eyes. She wanted no

more, she would ask no more; and let him only give her a sight of her child, safe and sound, and she would quit his house, the moment after.

Astonished at her claiming Mary Cooney, as her daughter, but also greatly affected by her agony of grief, the priest soothingly assured her that Mary should immediately stand before her, and he sent Mrs. Molloy into her bed-room, to summon her forth—the housekeeper informing him that it was there she was to be found, as, one or two hours before, she had retired thither with her book and her work. But Mary Cooney was not now in the bed-room. The potato-beggar shrieking high, in terror and anguish, ran to search the bed-room herself, then through and through the house, from top to bottom, she searched, but did not see her daughter.

She ran into the yard, the garden, the stable—she examined every corner—still without success. With outstretched arms, she fled from

the priest's premises into the neighbouring streets, hurrying from house to house, and questioning all she met for her "*own colleen beg*—her ould heart's darlin'"—but still, and still the distraught mother found not her child.

And Father Connell and his housekeeper, also greatly alarmed for their poor young inmate, made vain search in every direction for her.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mercilessly belabouring his poor phlegmatic horse, with his heavy cudgel—fury in his eyes, and threats and curses on his frothy lips—Gaby Mac Neary pushed on, for his country house. Arrived there, he thundered at its door, with his cudgel as well as with the knocker, so loudly, that the interior of the structure, from roof to cellar, rang and echoed again.

His very first peal had not concluded, when the door was pulled open by the boding and anxious Tom Naddy.

"Why have you kept me waiting so long,

you unchristened whelp?" he asked, with lungs that filled the house, even more fearfully than his knocking had done, and at the same time, he dealt Tom Naddy a blow, with his clenched fist, that spun him round, as if he had been a cork.

Not pausing for an instant, he then went up stairs, punching down his stick, at every step he took, with a violence that might seem to say he would wound, and hurt even the insensible timber he walked upon. He almost burst open the drawing-room door. Having let fall a book from her hands, his daughter, pale, and trembling very much, sat before him. She had heard the lion's roar, she had anticipated it's meaning, and she awaited, in terror and confusion, his approach.

He hastened straight on to her. He fiercely seized her arm; she winced and wreathed under the pain of his tight grasp.

"Soh! soh! soh!—my lady—madam—you have disgraced your father!"

He chucked her upward on her feet; and shook her so violently, that she must have fallen, but that the enraged man held her tottering figure partly erect by the arm, round which he still tightened his gripe, with a pressure such as the jaws of a vice might have inflicted. Helen screamed from pain and terror,

"Oh, father!" she cried, "have pity!"

"Pity on you! pity on such a creature as you! Have you not disgraced me? Answer me that question! Will you—will you answer me? Am I the father of a base daughter? Answer me!"

"Oh father! Oh sir! I can scarcely utter a word, you so frighten me, and hurt me—oh, father, you will kill me!"

"Still, I say answer me! Is your mother's daughter a degraded—a self degraded wretch?"

"No father, she is not!"

"Is she the vile refuse of the beggar's brat, Fennell? Is she?" his roar rose to a scream.

"No father, she is not." Helen was now

able to stand upright, without tottering, and her tears were fast drying, on her blazing cheeks.

"Did the beggar's brat, Fennell, meet you outside my house last night? And were his arms around you! And did ye meet with a kiss, and with a kiss did ye part?—Answer me!"

"Father, dear father, I will not, I cannot tell you an untruth—I—"

"Then it is true! then ye did meet in secret—outside my house, and in the night-time? And ye met with a kiss, and with a kiss ye parted? Get from me, jade!"

He flung her to the floor, smiting her violently on the cheek, as she dropt down. Outrageous passion is, for the time, outrageous madness.

He ground and gnashed his teeth—his eyes glared with insane fury; he hurried about, totally bereft of reason. He seized several of the frail little ornaments of the drawing-

room, and pelted them against the wall, shivering them in pieces ; he bellowed, imprecated, and cursed, like a veritable maniac.

His daughter lay motionless, upon her face, on the floor, and she was nearly as insensible as she was motionless. She heard his terrible voice, but knew not what he said. She felt a sense of immediate danger—of almost present death; but now understood nothing distinctly.

" Get up on your feet!" resumed her father, after some time. " Get up on your feet, or I'll trample on your disgraced carcass, while the life is in it! Get up this moment!"

With great pain and difficulty, Helen endeavoured to obey her frantic parent. She rose, and resting both her hands upon the back of a chair, thus kept herself from again falling.

" And he is to come here again to-night," her father continued, grinning closely into her face, and speaking through his clenched teeth. " And you'll ask me again to-night, to go out and look at the moon—the chaste moon—as

your poets call her—that is so fit for your admiration—and so fit a witness of *your* stolen meetings, with the beggar! You have made another appointment with him, for this very night—have you not? Hah! by the great heavens! he is sculking about my house this very moment!"

Thus interrupting himself, Gaby Mac Neary started and listened. The gigantic watchdog without began to bay furiously, setting up the peculiar angry bark which seemed to denote that he was in almost immediate contact with an intruder.

Gaby Mac Neary threw up a window, and looked out.

"Hulloo, hulloo, Bully! Hold him boy! Hold him Bully, until I come! Hulloo, hulloo, dog!" and his voice almost drowned that of the roaring brute he addressed.

He hurried into his bed-room, off the drawing-room. He issued back from it with a musket in his hands, which was always kept carefully loaded. He quickly descended the

stairs, to the hall, bellowing forth, on his way:

"Hulloo, hulloo, Bully! Hold him fast! I'm coming! Hold the beggar's brat!—Hulloo, hulloo, dog! Hold him, hold him!"

He flung open the hall door. At this moment, his daughter rushed staggering down the stairs, her hands clasped and clenched against her throat; her eyes and mouth wide open with terror—her hair dishevelled, and blood streaming over her cheek and neck, into her bosom. She flung herself on her knees before her father.

"Take *my* life," she said, "and spare *his!* I am his wedded wife! I am his lawful wife, as sure as my mother was your lawful wife! I am his wedded wife, and he is my wedded husband, and I can die to save him!"

"Hah! his wife? Die then, wife of the beggar! Die then, by the Heavens above me!"

The insane man pressed the muzzle of his musket to his daughter's forehead, and pulled at the trigger; she did not wince; but the

piece was only half cocked, and ere he could snatch back the cock, it was wrenched out of his hands by Tom Naddy, who instantly discharged it through the open hall door, and then pitched it far into the lawn.

"Cur!—mongrel cur!" shrieked his insane master, now almost inarticulate from hoarseness and passion, while the thick, clammy foam upon his lips, also helped to make his utterance imperfect. "Mongrel cur! how durst you do that?"

"To save you," answered Tom Naddy, walking backward towards the door from which he had emerged into the hall, while his furious master advanced on him—"to save you, you misfortunate man, from doin' a murther upon your own child, that would banish the sleep from your eyes, 'til the day they would hang you for it;" and Naddy stepped inside the doorway, shut the door, in his master's face, and locked it on the inside.

The baffled madman strove to kick it

open. Failing in his attempt, he reapproached his daughter. She was still kneeling, now almost stupified from exhaustion. "Up, up again!" he cried, once more clutching her arm, and forcing her up—"and begone from my house this moment! Quit it, and quit my sight for ever! Go to the beggar, that you call your husband! Go, keep your appointment with him—Get away! Begone, begone. jade! out of my house and my sight!"

Speaking thus, in disjointed words, he pushed her with both his hands across the hall, out at the door, and closed it with all his force upon her—the ponderous door, as it banged and clashed too, making a noise to which all the quiet places abroad re-echoed. The next instant, Gaby Mac Neary had fainted on the flags of the hall.

CHAPTER IX.

Helen had not spoken a word to her father, while the last shocking circumstances were occurring. With eyes fixed upon his face, not beseechingly, nor yet reproachfully, she only seemed to listen with the utmost attention, to every word that came from his lips. He placed the barrier of the door between him and her: and though she staggered from the force of his push, ere he had done so, Helen remained standing. Outside the door, she continued listening intently, bending her ear towards it, as closely as possible. She did not hear her

father's heavy fall, which was almost simultaneous with the thundering clash that accompanied her expulsion from his roof—and otherwise, all was silent. Her father spoke no further words, and Helen concluded, must have retired from the hall to the parlour. Then she slowly knelt down; raised her clasped hands above her head, and, straining her eyes upwards, muttered: —

"I give praises and thanks to my God in heaven! my father has not cursed me!"

She stood up and looked around her. It was a drizzly night, and the moon but imperfectly risen and wholly clouded; and there stood Helen, wearing only her slight evening dress, and bare-headed, and bleeding, and now shivering with cold, as well as from utter wretchedness, an outcast she thought, from human shelter or sympathy. Again she strained her sight, in every direction; the form of him whom her eyes sought, now her only protector, was not anywhere to be seen. She

started at a sudden recollection of his seeming to have come in contact with the ferocious watchdog; perhaps the savage animal had torn him and killed him; and she looked with shrinking horror on and about the spot, where to judge from the dog's position, when he barked and yelled, the evil must have happened. Nothing was to be seen; and she uttered another thanksgiving. She descended the few steps from the hall-door, and again stood still, on the gravel before the lawn; and once more peered round her through the darkness; but still her scrutiny was in vain. Gradually, and almost unconsciously, she walked away from her former home, often timidly stopping, and calling on her husband's name.

Hasty steps sounded coming after her, as if from the house; she turned eagerly round. Her father might have relented, and sent somebody to bring back to his hearthstone, his only child. It was Tom Naddy who approached her. He held a bundle in his hand, for the

contents of which, he had sent her maid into Helen's apartments. He produced from it a bonnet and cloak, and obtained permission from Helen to assist her in covering her head and person, from the night wind, and the penetrating mist. Other things were in the bundle, which he carefully tied up, and handed to his young mistress. She passively allowed him to adjust her cloak, and it was almost mechanically, that she took the bundle from him.

She enquired for her father.

He had shut himself up in his bedroom, Tom said, after calling for wine, and he would let no one near him, but kept walking up and down the apartment. And this was true; although Tom made no allusion to Gaby Mac Neary's having fainted in the hall, nor to his, Tom's efforts to restore him to his senses.

"An' you'll meet the young masther, mam," said Tom, "afore you go far, plase God; an' put all that about the dog an' himself out ov your head, fur no such thing happened, mam.

You know the way to the river side, don't you, mam?"

Helen answered that she thought she did.

"Well, mam, the moon, God bless her, 'ill soon be up, an' she'll guide you. Isn't id the river-side way the young masther is to come to-night, mam?"

Helen answered that it was.

"Well, mam, sure you can't fail to meet wid him; an' i'd go wid you mam, to be company to you on the way, only I know I can do betther fur you an' the young masther by stayin' in the house; besides, if the ould masther was to come to miss me out now, I'd have no chance ov gettin' in agen; but sure God will guard you, an' guide you, as well as the moon, mam, an' betther; an' as soon as ever I can folly afther you, I will, mam. An' make straight fur the river side, an' I'll be bail, you'll soon meet wid one that will be a comfort to you."

"Naddy!"

"Yis, mam."

"You'll mind every word my father says, and you'll report every word truly to me?"

"I will indeed mam."

"Every syllable he utters, Tom—every syllable he utters. Promise me solemnly—every syllable he utters."

"I give you the promise, mam; and I'll mind every syllable that comes out of his mouth."

"And Tom, be sure, be sure Tom, to mark well, if my father lays his curse upon me!"

"He won't do id, mam. You'll find he won't—God forbid he should."

"Amen, amen, to that, Tom! But, be on the watch for me:—the path to the river side you say?"

"Yis, mam, fur that's the way the young masther 'ill come, mam."

"Oh, yes, now I recollect; but it is very

dark, and somehow, I cannot see as well as usual, but that is not to be wondered at.—Good night."

"Don't go too far anyhow, mam; if oyu don't meet the young masther very soon intirely, sit down an' wait for me, mam; an' I'll race afther you, an' overtake you, as soon as ever I can quit the house agen, wid safety to us all."

"Very well, Tom—good night."

"May the Lord be wid you, mam; an' the good night kindly to you, mam."

Tom, running towards the house, was soon lost to her view; and Helen, with her bundle on her arm, but unconscious that she held it, proceeded on her way, to the river side.

From the effects of the fall of the heavy mist, the path she chose was miry and clinging, and almost at every step, her feet nearly slid from under her. She had gone but a short distance, when one of her slight slippers fastened in the clay, and shortly afterwards she lost the other.

She went on, almost on her bare feet, over stiles and fences; the rough stones of the tortuous path, and the stumps and briars of the fences often coming in contact with them, and causing them to bleed. Two or three times she fell, and was severely bruised; and then, there was the miserable consciousness of floundering through mud or wet grass, and briars, in the endeavour to regain her upright position. And yet, she made way against every obstacle with a singular pertinacity. Her mind was, in fact, in a state of wretched confusion. It seemed to her, as if the hands of her angry father were, with resistless force, continually pushing her forward; and she felt a sensation of utter abandonment, because no other arm was offered to support her.

At length, the physical power to go farther, quite failed Helen, and she sat down, from sheer exhaustion, not knowing the distance she had proceeded, or, indeed, the course she had taken. Then, it was a mercy to her, that she

wept, and wept profusely; by the indulgence of her tears, nature was relieved, and the exercise of her reason in some degree restored to her.

And then too, for the first time, did she feel, the hurts she had received, and confessed to herself the feebleness of her body; while also for the first time did she cast her eyes around her, in a reasoning effort to ascertain where she was.

The moon was now rapidly rising higher, and the pall of dingy clouds which had heretofore shrouded the whole arch overhead, was rolling itself up and away, leaving only some torn and loose fragments behind it; and the stars twinkled through deep blue; and the edges of these portions of vapour, nearest to the moon, began to assume a weak silvery tinge. The night was clearing up, in fact, and likely to become fine and lightsome.

But it was in vain that Helen, now capable of profiting by this favourable change, endea-

voured to renew an acquaintance with the objects around: they were strange, or nearly so to her; she had strayed, in fact, from the river-side path, in some direction not familiar to her perceptions; and yet she now called to mind that it was the river-side path branching to the house she had intended to take, in order to meet her husband.

"Heaven protect me!" she ejaculated, "we shall miss of each other, and I fear I must perish if I am left much longer without assistance."

Raising herself up, as well as she was able, Helen now listened anxiously for the sound of an approaching footstep. She only heard the noise of falling water straight before her; but even that was a slight relief. She knew that at this point the river was crossed by a weir, whence continued another path, to the town, with which she was well acquainted; if once upon that path she might succeed in gaining the town, and then her husband might be made

aware of her situation; but how far was the river from her? And by what way was it approachable? She peered through the distance, half chequered with the weak moonlight—fences and other obstructions were between her and the sound she heard; these difficulties she could not expect to overcome, and she again sank down despairingly.

The next moment however, as the thought of the long, long night came upon her, she once more started up, and tottered in the direction of the river. The noise of the falling water grew more distinct. The clouds had now almost entirely passed away from the moon, which, quietly mounting higher and higher in the heavens, flung her almost perfect light, over the open country; and gaining a little courage, from this seemingly good omen, Helen with increased pain and suffering, slowly proceeded on her course. She passed two fields, crossing their dividing fences, with the utmost difficulty. She reached the summit of a third boundary;

the noise of the weir came with certainty upon her ear, and she was sure that she saw the moonbeams glittering and dancing over the white foamy water which the barrier caused. She praised God again, and scrambled, and sometimes crawled forward, on hands and knees. One field only remained between her and the river-side, and that was a rapid descent.

Suddenly, men's voices, in angry discussion, fixed her attention, and the sound seemed to arise between her and the very point she had to attain. This was terrible—instinctively, she looked round for a hiding place. Above where she stood, was a little hollow, on the hill side, partially screened by briars, and bushes. To it she crept, and down into it, again lacerating herself with thorns and broken branches; and crouching among the bushes, listened with all her power of hearing, to the very voices that filled her with horror. She had lost, without attending to the loss, her bundle, her bonnet, and even her cloak.

The loud talking ceased, and there was but

one man's voice now heard, but this one was fearfully harsh and abrupt. Then female tones, in prayer and expostulation, mingled with it; then, female screams, shrill, long, and piercing, rang through the night air; and then, Helen heard the noise of a heavy blow, and the long shrieks suddenly stopped, subsiding into a low, melancholy cry, followed by deep, deep moans; and a second blow, accompanied by a hissing sound, of the human breath, such as workmen utter, when they labour with the hatchet. Perfect silence ensued, for a short time, only interrupted by the whispering of the night breeze through the grass, and through the bushes, and by the gentle fall of water, near at hand.

Oh, that was a pause of thrilling horror to Helen! for, above all her previous suffering, fear, and confusion, the conviction that she had overheard the doing of a murder, curdled her pure heart's blood, and made her very soul cower within her!

Hasty footsteps entered the little hollow, and paused within a few feet of where she lay concealed.

"This is the place that the ould divil bid us wait for him," said a hoarse, deep voice but in cautious tones.

"It is," answered another person—and the two words were spoken with a shudder.

"That was a black act," continued the first voice.

"Oh, it was a bloody deed! Oh, the thought of this night will never lave my mind, never, never! I wouldn't wish for all the world's coin, if 'twas laid before me this moment, that I didn't stop the hand of that hell-bird! Oh, she was a darlin', poor young crature! Why didn't we save her, Paul?"

"That oath! that frightful oath!"

"I'd break fifty oaths if I had the power of savin' her over agen, or if I could bring back the life to my poor beautiful Mary—I would

—I would," and the man whom his confreres called Molocth, or the wicked, suddenly stopped speaking, for his throat filled up to suffocation, and a throe of very agony was labouring in his black bosom.

" Bud her blood isn't on our hands, Dinnis."

" No. Bud curses be on our cowardly hands that didn't save her !"

" Unless we tuk ould Darby's life, an' buried him wid the weight of a hill's clay lying on his body, what use would there be in savin' her to-night, Dinnis? He'd meet her agen, an' he'd have his revenge; an' you know there's others to stand by Darby the divil; so that we could'nt be safe frum him or them—"

" If id was to be done agen, I'd save her, if he called up forty red divils to his side !"

" Husth ! he's comin' on us—There's no use in vexin' him, Dinnis."

The only answer Dennis made, was conveyed by delving his heel into the sod, and folding his arms tightly across his breast.

Robin Costigan rapidly hobbled up the little ascent from the river, closely followed by the Babby; and Helen, in her hiding place, could hear the puffing of his hyena breath, as he stood close to her.

"Is the horse an' car at the cross roads?" he questioned.

"It is there, an' Terry is guardin' id," answered Dennis.

"An' the kishes* turned mouth to mouth in id, as I tould ye?"

"An' the kishes, as you tould us."

"Babby!"

The familiar called came near, and looked up into the eyes of his superior. The full radiance of the moon shone on the face of the boy-monster, revealing the spots and dashes of blood upon it.

"Babby! get the bundle we left behind us

---

* Kish---a shallow, oblong, osier basket, open at top, and fitting close into "the car."

—an' hurry!—ye must be at the house by day dawn, an' be out of id agin in a hand's time, if the horse dropt down dead fur id—I'll go my own way afther ye—hurry, hurry."

The Babby parted with his arm the bushes and briars that shaded Helen's place of concealment, and towards which he had been glancing. Instantly, he stood transfixed, as if changed into stone, and he stared as if his eyes would fly from their sockets.

"Hurry, hurry! Did'nt I bid you hurry?" growled Costigan's voice, dangerously.

The well known accents of authority half broke the spell which had bound the precocious villain; he jumped backward, clutched his dreaded master by the arm, and with quivering fingers, pointed towards Helen's hiding place.

"What's the matther?" questioned Costigan, himself shivering.

"We left her below on the bank—dead—stone dead," whispered his pupil, "an' yet, now she is in there—in there."

"Who? who is there?"

" Mary—Mary—that we killed—is in there —I saw her sittin' in id—her eyes wide open, lookin' at me—aye, I saw her—the blood over her cheek too—aye, I saw her."

Robin Costigan advanced, and, in turn drew back the screen of wild bushes—

" An' dont you see her yourself?" continued the Babby. " Yis, an' by hell's fire, that other —that ould woman is at her back now !"

But Costigan beheld only the horror stricken and very nearly unconscious Helen, sitting behind the screen, her knees crippled up against her chest; her clenched hands resting on them; her neck and chin bent forward, and her eyes distended, without once winking.

Her great resemblance to her half sister, poor Mary Cooney, had deceived the conscience stricken, and most unnatural boy; but, Robin Costigan was not so taken by surprise, Only for a moment, he gazed at Helen—and then seized her, and dragged her forth, from her little retreat.

In dreams, while the most terrific circumstances are presented to the fancy, the greatest degree of horror we experience is when we make vain efforts to scream out our agony. Such was the sensation which now oppressed Helen. A shriek would have relieved the freezing terror of her heart, but she could not utter it; no—nor could she make even one struggle, one show of resistance; and a moment after, everything was whirl around her—her heart seemed to burst from its own tightness; and observation and sense, quite forsook her. Robin Costigan knew well who she was. Neither was he ignorant of the relationship existing between her and Mary Cooney.

"What were you doin' there? What did you hear, or what did you see, while you were there?" he questioned; but Helen answered not; her eyes closed, her knees bent, and she was supported in Costigan's loathsome arms, while he scowled into her face, and showed

symptoms of a renewal of the tragedy which had been perpetrated at the river side.

But Molocth interfered, and swore it should not be.

"She'll hang us—hang us—" growled his chief.

"There's enough of blood spilt," answered Dinnis Keegan, "an' fur poor Mary's sake, no finger shall harum this *colleen*."

"What do you say—what do you say?" questioned Costigan.

"I say that if I tuk you by the heels, Darby the divil—an' I'm sthrong enough to do id,—I say that if I tuk you by the heels, an' put your brains upon that rock, no harum shall come to her."

"I hear you—I hear you," muttered Robin, and there was a threat in his words and tone.

"Heed me then," retorted the mutineer.

"Here—carry her to the kishes."

Molocth frowned at him. But Paul Fin-

nigan remonstrated with his surly comrade; representing that if Helen was left behind, detection of the murder of Mary Cooney must certainly take place, before they could retire, as they had arranged, to a remote extremity of the kingdom, where the rest of their community awaited them; that they might be careful of their prisoner for a while, and then release her; and above all, he whispered, that it would be a fatal step to irritate Darby Cooney too far. Molocth yielded to this reasoning. During the short conference, Costigan had been silent and observant.

"Take her to the kishes," he once more commanded.

"Bud no harum is to come to her—mind that—" insisted Molocth.

"Take her—take her from me—an' my curses on her an' you!"

Helen was accordingly borne, by the two men, to the "cross-roads," about a quarter of a mile distant; and there deposited by them

in the wicker kish, upon some damp straw. Another kish was placed over this one, bottom uppermost, and well secured in its place with ropes. Then, the vehicle moved rapidly off.

CHAPTER X.

Mrs. Molloy had truly related that on the evening when Nelly Carty sought the beggar girl at the priest's house, Mary had retired into her bed-room, with her books and her work.

But her mind was not with either. She moved her lips mechanically, and uttered low, mumbling sounds, as she endeavoured to commit her task to memory; or she bent her eyes on her old patron's surplice, and strove to add a sprig or a leaf to its simple embroidery—no use. Her heart still fluttered with the ruffling

agitation of the day before. She recurred again and again to all the details of the visit of Edmund Fennell's young wife; to the features, the person, the manner, the sweet address, the sweet accents, and the everything fascinating of her successful rival; and then she reflected how very, very happy Edmund must be in the possession of such a bride; and she schooled herself, while tears came gush, gush from her eyes, to pray for a continuation of that happiness to him, and for countless blessings upon them both.

A great yearning to see Edmund Fennell mixed, however, every moment, with her reveries. Mary would give the wide world just to see him once more alone, and to tell him about the new acquaintance she had formed, and how beautiful his young wife was, and how grand, and how kind, and friendly—there surely could be no harm in wanting to speak with him, only for that. Indeed, and indeed, and God himself could witness, she had no other motive. But

Edmund was in Dublin, far far away—Mary believed, almost as far away as the end of the world, from her, and from every one that loved him; so, it was no use thinking any further about the matter.

At that moment, Edmund Fennell, his head and eyes intently cast down, passed rapidly by her window. Yielding to instantaneous impulse, Mary snatched up her little, coarse straw bonnet and her cloak, and really and truly without a defined intention, and in perfect innocence of heart, stole through the house on tiptoe, through the house door, and through the yard door, leaving both open after her, as Nelly Carty had found them, and then, walked along the suburb street, towards the country, in Edmund's track.

After clearing this suburb street, Edmund Fennell, without looking to the right or to to the left, had advanced about half a mile, along the river side, or near to it. Mary as

yet, kept at some distance behind him. There was now a level meadow to his one hand, extending to the water's brink; and immediately to his other hand, a grove crossed the hill side, through which wound the beaten pathway. In this spot, Mary Cooney ran forward to overtake him. He heard her rapid, light footsteps behind him, he turned and instantly encountered poor Mary, flushed and panting, from the excitement and unusual effort of her race, and laughing and crying together, from her emotions. Unable to speak a word, she clung to his arm. In low and gentle tones, Edmund at first enquired why she had thus followed him. Still deprived of the power of distinct utterance, Mary replied in gasps, that she could not tell; only her eye had caught him passing by the priest's house, and she had run out just to see him, and to speak with him —it was so very, very long, since they had had a word together—and to walk a bit at his

side, through the green fields, and by the shining river, and—here Mary's breath again quite failed her.

Edmund gently expostulated with her; pointing out the unseemliness of their being thus observed together. She wept, and still clung to his arm. He called to mind what business he had in hand; he looked at his watch, there was now scarce time to be punctual in his appointment with Helen; and in a voice and manner less gentle, though still only energetic, he again exhorted Mary to release his arm, and leave him free to walk on, as fast as he could; respect for herself, he said, even her sense of delicacy, ought to tell her she was acting wrong. Besides he had a pressing engagement, and must keep it.

Mary now wept outright; she could well conjecture what engagement he meant, and upon mere natural impulse, clung closer to him. Time still lapsed, Edmund's voice sounded high, and perhaps harshly, though he did not intend

it. Suddenly, though even yet not ungently, he freed himself of his poor follower, and the instant he had done so, ran forward with as much speed as he could.

Mary after standing an instant alone, grew giddy and weak, and dropt on the grass. Soon getting a little better, she listened for the sound of his retreating footsteps; they came not on her ear; it was deep twilight, and she could not at all get a glimpse of his figure. And now, half sitting up, the force of her original feelings towards Edmund, little checked for the moment, by the dicipline they had lately undergone, took possession of poor Mary's bosom, and she began to give vent in loud lamentations, to her sense of abandonment and hopelessness—clapping her hands, and rocking her body to and fro.

The fit in a degree subsided; she jumped up and looked about her. But no thought of home came into her head; no thought of Mrs. Molloy's fireside, or of her evening sitting with

Father Connell; or of her needlework, or of her books for Mick Dempsey; and she at length mechanically and stupidly wandered forward in the direction which Edmund had taken, without purpose and without hope.

She soon grew weary and tired, and cold, and wet, from the falling mist, and the keen breeze of the autumn evening. She again looked round her. The river was still near at hand, but she had never before been so far along its banks. Home now slightly occurred to her; but she did not want to go home so soon; she sat down on a large stone, and here, along with all her agitation of mind, all her young love's despair, all her weariness, her shivering, and the almost drenching she had encountered, another passion began to seize upon Mary's heart. And that passion was fear! deadly sickening fear, in her present lonely and unprotected situation. Terrible fear—her old fear—her fear of Darby Cooney!

And at that very moment, Darby Cooney's

eye was upon her—he was watching her from a hiding place, as she sat on the large stone. Her own mother, Nelly Carty had sent him down to meet her at the river-side, by interrupting his course on the high-road, towards the conclusion of her interview with Gaby Mac Neary.

CHAPTER XI.

Ned Fennell rapidly proceeded on his way. He arrived at the place agreed on, between Helen and himself, for their meeting. She was not there. For a long time, he awaited her coming; she did not come. Oppressed with forebodings of evil, Edmund, after a lengthened watching, left the spot, and came within view of Gaby Mac Neary's little villa. Here all was dark, stilly, and sad, with the exception of the windows of the bedroom which he knew to be occupied by the master of the

house. None of the others had a gleam of light in them; but in this one candles burnt brightly; and across the linen blinds, which were drawn down, he could see pass and repass the shade of Gaby Mac Neary's figure. Vainly did he bend his eyes to detect light or sound in Helen's sleeping chamber. He stole to the rear of the house. Still all was dark and dismally silent. He returned to its front. Gaby Mac Neary was still pacing up and down his room. He went back to the place of appointed rendezvous—it was lonely. Again he visited the house; again he saw Gaby Mac Neary's shadow flit from window to window—but nothing more. And thus he spent the livelong night walking from the ground of appointment to the house, and from the house back again to it; and still, Gaby Mac Neary's shade—as if it had been his veritable ghost, troubled after death, on account of his own monstrous cursing and swearing while in the

flesh, appeared on the window blinds; and there was nought else to afford him subject for observation.

The day dawned. It was twilight. The earliest rising bird, the robin, sang a little ballad, in joy of the coming day; the little wren next began his chirp, in the green hedge; anon from their far off rookery, came the serious industrious crows, cawing and croaking, and giving all kinds of directions, and making all kinds of signals to each other, as they heavily winged their way, in line of march, above Edmund's head; and, ere the sun's rays glanced upwards, over the heavens, imbuing the clouds with gradations of vermilion colour, from dense to sober, from sober to glorious, the lark sprung up from his nest—

> "—and to morning's gate,
> Soared the god to gratulate."

And then, they were all awake; all the birds, the little and the greater, all that can sing, or

utter a cry, or a note; the swift, the martin, and the swallow, darting like arrows through the air, and twittering as they shot along; the thrush and the blackbird, whistling and gurgling forth their songs; the piping bullfinch; the chaffinch, with his monotonous couplet; the gay linnet, with his prolonged piece of music; the impudent sparrow, with his bold and noisy chirping; the goldfinch, with his loud and excelling melody; the yellowhammer, with his musical call: the hedge-sparrow, the lonely tenant of the hedge, with his single sad note; the jackdaw, daw, dawing; but still, doing his best to give utterance to his pert and frisky satisfaction; nor must even the Sir Motley of the open fields, the magpie, be forgotten, athough his voice of joy broke forth only in a most pragmatical jabber; all, all the birds were awake, and up, and out, and doing.

Upon no former morning, during his whole past life, could Edmund Fennell have been un-

influenced by those sights and sounds, and all the other sights and sounds of early morning around him; often had they had the power, acting upon his sympathising and ready spirit, of making him jump high and shout out with very joy. Now he heard them not—he saw them not. Fears for the safety of his young wife possessed him, to the full exclusion of every other interest. Her father's rage had suddenly overtaken her in some shape or other, too horrible to conjecture; and her private marriage with him was the cause of the calamity. So he could only loiter and linger near the house, or in the place named for the meeting, long after the morning broke, and until the broad glory of full day warned him that a longer delay must expose him to disagreeable observation.

He then paced towards the river side, in deep and troubled thought; and, still absorbed in painful reflection, he came near to a little crowd of ten or more persons, before he was

aware of their proximity. He glanced at them observantly for a moment. Some were discoursing eagerly, and with excited gestures; while the greater number listened with countenances of terror-stricken interest.

Edmund recollected his soiled and, it must be haggard appearance, the result of a night spent in agitation, without repose, and in the wet and miry fields; and not wishing to attract notice, in such a trim, he turned from the men, re-crossed the stile which he had just come over, and keeping to the right, continued stealthily by a high and close hedge—still on his way towards the town, however. The hedge ran up a rising ground, but ended at the top of the ascent; he became exposed to the view of the persons whose eyes he wished to avoid, and he continued his way, running. To his great astonishment, these people shouted after him, and amid their shouts, or their loud talking with one another, Edmund thought he could catch the sound of his own name, pronounced

in angry accents. He looked and listened. The crowd now increasing in numbers, were in rapid motion towards him, and certainly called out to him by name, and threateningly commanded him to stop. He did stop, and fully confronted them, still in great wonder. Nearer and nearer they came, making a great clamour, addressing him in opprobrious language, and uttering shrill and hooting shouts. They closed upon him, and struck at him. He defended himself against the fierce, and to him, unaccountable aggression, but was soon overpowered. They threw him on his back on the ground, and bound his arms.

"What do you mean?" he asked, amidst the deafening clamour, "what have I done?"

Twenty voices answered together, "You know well what you've done! You have done a frightful murder!" and they groaned at him in the gutteral accents of detestation.

Through all their noise, a single whisper

pierced its way into his ear, distinctly uttering the following words:—

"Will you stand by the gallow's foot, now, an' Robin Costigan swinging on it?"

He turned his head, and looked keenly in the direction whence the whisper came; it had been uttered by one of the men who leant over him, holding him down on his back; this person having jumped up, was now shuffling away through the crowd. Edmund called on the people to seize him, but his voice was drowned in the uproar of threats and revilings directed against himself; and when, perforce, he was obliged to march towards the town, surrounded by his captors, Edmund vainly sought to discover, in the angry faces of those around him, the never-to-be-forgotten features of his inveterate, self-vowed enemy, Robert Costigan.

Bruised and bleeding, from the blows he had received—barcheaded too, for his hat

had fallen off in the scuffle—bound with ropes —his dress torn, almost to tatters—and preceded and followed by a yelling crowd, that every instant augmented, Edmund Fennell was conveyed along the streets of his native town.

As they passed through the populous suburb, men, women, and children came out, in hundreds, to meet him, and, when they had learned the cause of his being a prisoner, to shout at him, with the rest—to groan at him, abuse him, and execrate him.

He was taken to the house of the chief magistrate. The gravity of the charge brought against him, ensured a speedy investigation of it; and before seven o'clock, that morning, the accused was formally committed to prison, to stand his trial, for his life, in the course of the same day, before the judge, whom Gaby Mac Neary had gone to attend, as grand juror, upon the previous one.

His sudden capture—the severe ill-treatment he had received—his rapid committal to jail—

together with his preceding agitation, on Helen's account, and his sleepless and restless night—everything had so stunned Edmund Fennell that he could scarcely attend to the evidence adduced against him before the magistrate. Now, in his lonesome cell, his mind began slightly to settle, and to comprehend the magnitude of his danger, and he could recur somewhat more distinctly to that evidence.

There had been unseen witnesses of his interview with Mary Cooney, late on the previous evening.

It will be recollected that she had come up with him at a point where a grove, ascending a hill, was to his one hand, and the river with a spread of level sward, between it and him, to his other hand. On the immediate verge of the water, two men were, at this moment, reclining. They were engaged angling with lines, and thus at their ease, inertly watched the progress of their sport.

These men had observed the meeting between

the beggar-girl, and her young benefactor. Too distant to overhear the conversation of the youthful pair, they could understand, however, that, in the very first instance, the girl wished to remain with Ned Fennell, and that he wished to part from her. When Edmund's voice rose high, they caught its accents, though still not the words he spoke; but they noticed well, his separating poor Mary's clinging hands from his arm; his sudden and quick retreat; her as sudden fall upon the grass, which they believed and swore to have been caused by his violence; and then, her sobs and cries distinctly reached them; and finally they saw her wander along the path which Edmund had taken until she was quite lost to their view. And, in conclusion, they swore that, from the tones of his voice, and from his angry gestures, at parting from her, the young man had, to the best of their belief, addressed threatening words to the young girl.

The body was not discovered on the spot

where, evidently, murder had been perpetrated —evidently according to all the evidence. For on that spot was a stone, smeared with blood, and near it a lock of long, shining hair had been found, also clotted with blood: the sward around was much trodden and trampled, and close to the water, on the bank above, was an impression in the grass—plainly one made by a recumbent female figure; while round the imprint of the head, and defining its form, appeared a mass of coagulated gore.

Then, Ned Fennell had been absent from his home all the night, and he was seized near the scene of the murder, while in the very act of returning to it, doubtless after having conveyed the corpse of his victim to some place of concealment not yet ascertained—and returning to it for the purpose of obliterating all marks and proofs of his abominable crime. And the appearance of his attire proved that he had spent the hours of darkness prowling in muddy places, while the expression of his face suggested

that he had recently undergone fatigue and agitation; and what but guilt could have made him skulk away, from the group of persons at the river side, and creep along the hedges, and run fast when they first called to him?

There were, indeed, no marks of blood upon him; but those he must have washed away, for his clothes were quite wet.

On this evidence Edmund Fennell was committed for trial. Little more than an hour elapsed, however, when additional facts were brought against him, which, in the public eye, fully proved him a murderer.

Gaby Mac Neary had, the previous night, turned his only daughter, and only child, out of his house, in consequence of discovering a private intimacy between her and Ned Fennell. This, Gaby himself was authority for. The lock of hair found near the blood-covered stone, and which evidently had been torn by force from the wearer's head, he at once recognised as being of the exact

colour and texture of his daughter's hair. In the little hollow on the hill side, a cloak and bonnet were discovered; also a bundle, containing articles of female dress—all of which he knew, and got others to prove, to have been the property of Helen Mac Neary. The cloak and bonnet were shown to the men who had observed the meeting between Edmund Fennell and an unknown young person the evening before; and although they could not swear to the colour or texture of these matters, still, to the best of their belief they were the self-same cloak and bonnet which the girl had on. Helen Mac Neary, then, was the individual murdered by Edmund Fennell. Search had been made for her in every direction; but "tale or tidings" of her no one could supply. And after her expulsion from her father's house she had gone to seek her seducer, and either throw herself upon his protection, or upbraid him as the author of her misfortunes; and she met with him by chance, by the river side, and he

flung her off and ran from her, and she followed him, and it must be, again overtook him; and then, irritated by her continued reproofs, and giving way to what must have been a long-lurking change in his feelings towards her, the former ardent and successful lover freed himself, by the alternative of murder, of his now hated victim.

CHAPTER XII.

It is not in the power of language to convey, even remotely, a notion of the overwhelming horror, that tumbled down upon Edmund Fennell, as this new evidence was communicated to him. He had fixed it as certain in his own mind that, after parting from Mary Cooney, she had been encountered and murdered, by Robin Costigan. All his recollections of the old villain's threats to the poor beggar girl, and the indistinct vision caught of him, while Edmund lay bound and prostrate among his captors, plausibly confirmed

the truth of this conclusion; and, apart from his own sufferings and danger, he experienced many a bitter pang, while contemplating the supposed fate of his unhappy young friend.

But now, it seemed certain, that his own wife had been the victim of the mysterious tragedy! And that he, he was accused as the shedder of her blood! And yet, that was nothing: nay, he was almost glad of it, for in horror, in despair, and in prostration of heart and mind, he grimly felt that public exposure, public revilings, and a public death upon the gallows, were now necessary to suit and to end his inexpressible sense of misery.

There is an old saying—"when a man is down, down with him;" and Edmund Fennell soon proved it to be a truism. Anticipated condemnation was universal against him. No word of pity for his situation was spoken from one to another, throughout his native city; and not one voice was raised in doubt of the

guilt of a formerly esteemed, and well-conducted young person.

In his prison, no friendly face appeared to offer him counsel or consolation. Under favour of the jailor indeed, many came to gaze at him ; but, although Edmund could recognize some intimate acquaintances, among those curious persons, none of them now stepped forth to offer him the hand of fellowship ; but they scowled at him, or else gaped half in fear, upon the haggard murderer.

The hour for his trial drew near. The jailor appeared to warn him of the fact, and to advise him to send for a legal person, to prepare his defence. Edmund started at the official stupidly. His mind was one whirl of confusion and dismay ; and he could scarce understand what he was asked to do. But at length comprehending that he was exhorted to take friendly counsel of some one, he desired that Father Connell, and Tom Naddy might be sent for. This request was granted ; but the

messenger soon returned to say, that the priest was distant in the country, since day-break that morning ; and that Tom Naddy had quitted his master's house, and was no where to be heard of.

The jailor again proposed that an attorney should be called in, with all dispatch—adding that the grand jury, in the court house above their heads, had found true bills against Edmund, and that his indictment was in progress of being made out ; so that, therefore, not an instant was to be lost. An attorney accordingly attended the accused ; and to him Edmund, over and over again said—" I am innocent ! I am totally innocent of this hideous charge ! As God lives, and hears me, I am innocent !" But he could not bring his mind further to commune with his legal adviser. The gentleman put questions in detail to him ; he answered only by bewailing the loss of his young wife, and wringing his hands, and shuddering at the thoughts of her horrid death.

The attorney quitted his cell, and in strict confidence told the first person who asked him a question on the subject, that he would do all in his power for the young fellow, but that he feared with little chance of success; and very knowingly he shook his head as he made this declaration.

About two hours more went by, and, true to his prognostic, the jailer came to conduct Edmund up into the court house. After traversing some narrow dark passages, they arrived at a flight of spiral steps, ascended it—and through a trap-door, Edmund suddenly found himself emerged into the dock of the city-court —a sea of heads before him and around him—his judge, clothed in scarlet and ermine straight before him—the galleries also thronged with human faces to his front and to either hand—and every face turned to him—and the hosts of cold detesting eyes fixed on him—a freezing firmament of eyes, poor Edmund vaguely thought.

He was stunned for an instant, and staggered towards the side of the dock.

" And is it Robin Costigan they are goin' to thry fur his life to-day !" asked a voice, in a whispering under growl, close to him.

He jumped round, but again failed to catch a sight of certain well-known features.

The jailor called him to stand forward at the bar. His jury were being sworn, he said, and this was the time for his challenges, if he had any to make.

Edmund really did not understand ; but he answered " no ; he had no challenges to make ; he had nothing to object to any one."

It may be asserted that the anticipated public condemnation, out of doors, accompanied the very jury into their box ;—that in fact, they had already, each, in his own breast, agreed on their verdict. A few there might have been amongst them, who, as they looked at the pale, ghastly lad, still in his soiled and torn attire, and his toilet wholly unattended

to, because wholly unthought of, said to themselves—" we must divest ourselves of our prejudice;" but this very resolve to guard against their prejudice, only proved its existence.

The trial proceeded. The evidence given before the magistrate was now repeated against the arraigned prisoner at the bar. Edmund seemed to attend to what was going on; but his mind was, for the most part far away—summoning up before itself, a horrid and revolting picture of Helen's murder by the lonely riverside. A slip of paper reached him from an unknown person, and was delivered into his hands by the jailor. Edmund read upon it, " has the prisoner no counsel?" He replied, speaking to the jailor " no—not one," and took no further notice of the matter. The jailor telegraphed the meaning of this answer to a young gentleman, sitting near the evidence table, who immediately rose, and addressed the court. He was a briefless barrister, just " called," and " going circuit," upon the vague hope of being,

some time or other, engaged in some case or other, by some attorney or other. But, the briefless young barrister had a feeling heart, if not professional notoriety; and this, joined with a little laudable ambition, to make himself known, in any way, now caused him, as has been said, to address the judge.

"My lord," he began, "the unhappy young prisoner at the bar, not having counsel engaged, I will act for him, if he and your lordship are satisfied."

The jailor whispered Ned Fennell, and again nodded assentingly to the volunteer counsel; the judge after a wide distension of his cheeks, and the emission of a long puff of breath, also nodded.

"Then, my lord, I have at once to submit that the prisoner having been called on to plead against a charge of murder, which no one saw him commit, and which even cannot be proved to have been committed at all—for the case for the prosecution has just closed, with-

out either attempt at such proof having been made—"

"My lord," interrupted a little sharp-faced gentleman, hopping up from the seats assigned to the prosecuting counsel—"I beg Mr. A—a—a—a—a's pardon; but if he will have a little patience, he may find much of his sagacity anticipated; we have not formally closed our case, my Lord; and we paused a moment only to consider a new piece of evidence—"

"New evidence," said his Lordship, with an additional glow of red, visible even over his always red face, and his grey eyes sparkled with satisfaction—"new evidence? Go on with it."

The poor briefless young barrister sat down, crest fallen. James Rafferty was called to the witness table. A strange looking boy presented himself,—one whom no one regarded with pleasure or comfort. He was quite unknown in the town or neighbourhood, he said; a fatherless and motherless beggar boy; and

he had been making his way into the town by the river side, late last night, when he heard angry voices approaching him on the path; and being only a poor boy, and no one at his side, he ran and hid himself behind some furze bushes. A young man, and a young girl came up—he believed he ought to call her a young lady, from her dress, and from her "fine speech." She applied hard names to the young man;—he did not remember all the names—and what he subsequently beheld terrified him so much, that it was no wonder he should forget them; but he did remember one of them; the young girl called the young man her "desthroyer."

The witness then saw the young man and the young woman scuffle together; and then, the former took up a stone, and struck the latter on the forehead, and he struck her again and again, until she fell down. And the young man went away, when the young woman had lain motionless for some time; and the boy

crept out to look at her, and she was dead. He heard the man returning, and hid himself again. The man stood for a while over the corpse, then stooped down, raised it across his arms, and went away with it.

Witness concluded by saying, that he was so much frightened, he was afraid to stir from his hiding-place, until the day began to break; that then he ran, as well as he could, to the next farm-house, but was too weak to continue his way to the town, until he had got something to eat; but that, as soon as he could, he did come in, and immediately told his story at the mayor's office.

He was asked if he could point out the person he had seen committing this dreadful deed; he answered that he thought he could, for the moon was high, and he had seen him plainly. The crier's rod was placed in his hand. He turned slowly round; and as he touched with it the head of the prisoner, a fearful murmur ran through the crowded court-house.

This was all like a loathsome dream to poor Edmund Fennell, though he knew it to be reality.

The judge on the bench, was a man who, it was said, scarce ever permitted one grain of mercy to be dropped into the scales of justice, while he held the balance. He would bully the criminal who pleaded for compassion; but above all, while a wretched fellow creature trembled before him on the crumbling verge of eternity, he would be facetious, flashing some miserable pun into the face of the doomed man; and then, glancing round to note an approval of his faint witticism among his auditors. Sometimes he was called "Judge Bladder-chops," or the "Puffing Judge;" sometimes he was called the "Punning Judge; but oftener the "Hanging Judge."

"Curran," said he, at a large dinner party, "is that *hung* beef before you?" "No," answered Curran, in his shrill, fife-like voice, "but let you only *try* it, and it soon will be."

In fact, he was the judge who had presided over the trial of Robert Emmett, and whose conduct and words on the occasion have, with the assistance of the poor young enthusiast's comments upon them, immortalized his Lordship in a very peculiar way.

This man charged the jury upon Edmund Fennell's trial—In that charge, there was not a word of merciful interpretation of circumstances, in favour of the undefended and undefending youth before him. On the contrary, it much resembled a violent speech to evidence, by an attorney-general, upon an ex-officio prosecution. The jury retired to their room, with brows of which any one might interpret the meaning; stopt in it just long enough to give the appearance of not being in an unseemly haste in deciding upon their verdict; returned to their box, one by one; took their seats slowly, and it seemed sorrowfully, after all their prejudice against the prisoner; answered

to their names, when called over to turn, by the proper officer in low and solemn voices; and not even a breathing could be heard among the gazing and listening multitude, as the usual routine of words passed between them and the same individual:—

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed to your verdict?"

"We have."

"Who answers for you?"

"Our foreman."

"How say you, gentlemen of the jury—In the first count of the indictment, is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty."

And the answer of the Foreman of the jury was given in a whisper so thin and wiry—

"There was nought
Between it and silence."

And yet, it was heard in the farthest corner of that crammed and suffocating hall.

"Look to him jailer," immediately said the registrar of the Court; and although these also were but words of course, and often carelessly uttered, they now seemed to be deeply felt by the person who spoke them, and broke upon the stilly pause around with the solemnity of a knell.

Clasping his hands tightly, the miserable youth at the bar, raised his blood-shot eyes upwards, and his white lips moved without sound: then he seemed endeavouring to arrange his disorganized ideas. Several times he pressed the lower parts of the palms of his hands against his temples, as if he believed that his brain was about to burst through them, and that he must thus try to keep it in its place.

The officer of the Court, who had just consigned him to the watchfulness of his jailer, now glanced back at the judge, and receiving his significant nod, again spoke:—

"Prisoner at the bar, have you anything to

say why sentence of death and execution should not be passed upon you?"

"I have," answered the prisoner, speaking impressively, though in a low voice—"I have; is this the time for me to say it?"

"It is."

"My Lord, I will not take up much of your time; I am not able to do so, if I wished to do so. My Lord, to my amazement, and my utter consternation and dismay, I find myself, all within a few hours, arrested, committed, tried, and found guilty of a crime, which, upon any human creature, I would not perpetrate, were it to purchase a place in Heaven for me. But of this—of *this* murder—oh, how innocent am I! My Lord, the Judge of us all, and high above us all, before whose throne I must speedily appear, witnesses, to his own mercy and compassion, how innocent!"

"Prisoner," interrupted the judge, gurgling his words, through a mass of fat, and inflating

his cheeks with his wheezing breath, "Prisoner, you have had a fair and impartial trial, and you have been found guilty, by a jury of your fellow citizens—an upright and conscientious jury; and this unsupported assertion of your innocence, against their decision, and against the clearest testimony, is only a useless occupation of the time of the Court." (Puff, puff, puff.)

"My Lord," resumed the prisoner, "I am sorry if what I have spoken was wrong. As well as I can recollect, I intended to say nothing calculated to offend the Court, or the jury. I am bound to take it for granted that both have fairly discharged their duty."

He bowed his head for a moment on his hands, then extending his arms, and turning his eyes upwards, suddenly cried out—

"The Almighty Maker never sent from his hands upon this earth, a more perfect specimen of his work than you were, my own Helen! And human body never held within it a tenderer, a more devoted heart than yours did!

Deep and eternal damnation be the doom of him who shed your precious blood!"

There was a suppressed burst of grief amongst those who surrounded the evidence table; but over all these symptoms of sudden emotion, old Gaby Mac Neary's convulsive sobs were audible.

The prisoner continued with an impetuosity that nothing could interrupt.

"And I am told that you have been murdered, and I have been convicted as your murderer! I—I, to whom you gave your young love! I, to whom you gave your hand in marriage! Yes, Helen, yes! my wife, you were—" tears now burst from his hitherto dry eyes. "My wife! the wife of my bosom! my good! my young! my beautiful bride! and my maiden bride too! Oh, God! oh, God! How little do they know who call me your murderer, the bereavement of my wretched heart, at the thought of your loss!"

"Prisoner at the bar," again interrupted the

judge, " you have uttered language, which out of respect to the afflicted father of the murdered young lady, cannot be permitted by the Court. You have called her your wife."

" *Called* her my wife?" interrupted Edmund in his turn, as he stept, almost jumped back, " and does any one say she was not my wife?" he continued fiercely, " who dares to say it? Does any one of you all who crowd round about me here, to gratify your want of charity, by witnessing the despair, and the agony of my young heart—does any one of you all dare to say it?" from side to side of the crowd, and up and down from them to the galleries, and from the galleries to them again, his wild glances flew.

" No!" answered a loud but yet broken voice, and Gaby Mac Neary started up, turned round, and fully confronted the prisoner, while he frowned deeply, although his tears came. " No! I am her father, and I believe she was your wife—she told me so herself," he added,

his voice giving way, as he suddenly dropt into his seat again.

"God bless you, and thank you, sir!" cried Edmund. "God bless you!"

The judge gave a greater puff than he had that day uttered.

"Why have we not had evidence of this?" he demanded.

Edmund had again sunk his forehead upon his open hands; he now slightly started, uncovered his face, looked thoughtful for an instant, and his late impetuosity calmed down, replied to the bench in a quiet tone, while he bowed respectfully.

"My Lord, I could not—I would not have tendered evidence upon that point, if I had had twenty lives to save; for, as your Lordship knows, I could have proved it only by disclosing the name of the clergyman who married me to my beloved Helen; and you are also aware, my Lord, that such a disclosure would

subject him, by the law of the land, to a felon's punishment."

All eyes were now fixed, with a very changed expression, upon the prisoner. The judge emitted a puff, which might be called the puff bewildered. Gaby Mac Neary stood up a third time, contemplated his former friend with peculiar interest, and then, muttering a something ejaculatory, which on this grave occasion we shall not further describe, pounded his stick against the floor, and again sat down.

"Is it the intention of the prisoner to occupy any further the time of the court?" demanded the judge.

"Only for a few moments longer, my Lord. Your Lordship is about to pronounce the dread sentence of the law upon me. I know it is a dreadful one, and yet, I do not dread it. I accept it as a boon, as a charity, and as such, thank you for it. And I know it is a horrible thing to die a murderer's death upon the

gibbet; a very, very horrible thing; but to me it will be a pleasing thing; to me, the hopeless, and the broken-hearted lad before you, it will prove a blessing, not a punishment. Were I to live on, it must be in utter misery, and in utter darkness of the heart; for with her who is gone from me, the light of life has gone also. My Lord, I await your sentence."

Recapitulating the evidence, the judge drew from it most unquestionable proofs of the prisoner's guilt, and warned him that, in the desperate position in which he stood, it would much better become him to declare at once, his abominable crime, than to persevere in groundless assertions of his innocence. That the murdered lady was the prisoner's wife, it was impossible to believe; but if such were really the fact, why had not proof been given of it? and his Lordship had asked the question before. Surely the proof were easily attainable. As to the reason assigned, why it had not been—namely, that the prisoner

would not place in jeopardy the—his Lordship supposed—popish priest, who, it was pretended, had performed the ceremony—that could not be a motive likely to influence an individual who had no hesitation in staining his soul with innocent blood. Much more was said, not, we hope, with the intention of making the sufferer writhe; and at last, came the sentence of the law—the judge hastily, and as if eagerly, proceeding to put on that silly thing, the melodramatic black cap, before he pronounced it. At the expiration of forty-eight hours, the prisoner was to be conveyed to the common place of execution, and there hanged by the neck, until he was dead—

"Hanged by the neck until you are dead," repeated a voice, in cautious whispers, somewhere near to Edmund.

After which the prisoner's body was to be given for dissection—

"And your body to be given for dissection," continued his invisible tormentor—

"And the Lord have mercy on your soul," ended his Lordship—

"An' somebody else be ready to recave your sowl!" paraphrased the hissing whisperer.

But simultaneously a thousand voices piously and fervently cried "amen," to the judge's more merciful prayer.

CHAPTER XIII.

With a kind of nightmare sensation, the sentenced Ned Fennell having been reconducted to his cell, beneath the court house, seated himself on the miserable bedstead, which was in a nook of the miserable place. The jailer and a turnkey passed out of his dungeon, and locked the door, but he took no notice. They had asked him some questions—he had returned them no answers. It was now deep darkness all around him ; he sat still and stirred not. Rats came and walked about his feet—he was vaguely conscious of their being

so near him; but he made no attempt to chase them away. And how long he remained in this motionless, feelingless, callous condition, he did not know, and he did not care to know. The door of his cell re-opened, and a turnkey, wearing a black mask, entered, a rushlight in his hand, and was followed by the Catholic clergyman, whose duty it was to prepare sentenced criminals for death; and still, the circumstance scarcely aroused him from his lethargy.

The priest and he were left together. He gazed at his visitor, but only with a dull expression. The clergyman addressed him commiseratingly; and Edmund seemed gradually to catch meaning from his words—seemed to comprehend the horrible past, and the terrible future. He sank on his knees and prayed. His companion followed his example, and prayed with him. A solemn view of the necessity of preparing for his death, now almost exclusively filled his

soul; the judgment throne—the greatness, and the power, and the majesty of Him who sat upon it, came before him, in a vision, as it were, and yet, almost a palpable one.

The priest and he still knelt and still prayed together. Then Edmund Fennell prayed by himself; and then, having signified his readiness to begin the confession of his sins, the clergyman sat on the bedstead, while he knelt beside him. The confession was over; the penitent now sat close by his spiritual friend, and for some time, they so remained, hand in hand together.

Presently the priest addressed to him soothing and consoling words, inspiring the great hope of a place of rest in another world, and Edmund, with a placid countenance, listened attentively; he could now thank God and his reverend comforter, for a great relief of heart.

For some time, there had been hasty steps, passing and repassing outside the cell. The

conversation between the priest and Edmund began to assume a mixed character, partly worldly, and partly religious. The former learnt from the latter, that he had not tasted food for thirty hours; he started up, and knocked at the door of the dungeon; it was opened, and Father Connell appeared standing without.

The instant Edmund beheld the old man, he bent his knee to the floor of his prison, and looked with a seeking earnestness into his protector's face. Neither of them wept at this meeting; the cause of it "lay too deep for tears." Father Connell advanced, very slowly, to Edmund. Arriving close to the spot, on which he knelt, the aged priest raised his hat, and stretched forward his right arm over the head of the suppliant, and looking upwards, prayed with great solemnity.

"May He, whose mercy is as unbounded as his power and his justice, have mercy and compassion on you!"

Edmund Fennell kissed the hand that had been raised to Heaven for him. Father Connell gazed at him, filled with the woe that speaks not—Edmund broke the silence:—

"Fear not much for me, sir," he said, in a calm though sorrowful voice—"I am not guilty of the horrid act for which they have sentenced me to a dreadful death."

The old man stept back, catching his breath.

"Edmund Fennell," he said, "you are kneeling—is this true?"

"It is, my father," answered Edmund.

He arose and spoke apart with his confessor. Father Connell understood him, and watched them both, with devouring eagerness.

"Now sir," resumed Edmund, addressing the young priest, and motioning towards the elder.

"Sir," said the former, approaching Father Connell, "I have permission from my penitent to declare to you, that, under the seal of confession, he has asserted his innocence of hand, act, or part in this murder, and of all know-

ledge of it, previous to his being accused of it."

"Then let me hold you in my arms, my son," said Father Connell, "and praise the Lord with you."

After embracing Edmund, they entered more into particulars. The other clergyman was of their council. Edmund, for the first time since he was thrown down and beaten by his captors, could now exercise the powers of his mind—his recollections, his judgment, his reasoning and comparing faculties; and he supplied to his two clerical friends statements which, but a few hours before, might have done him some good service. He mentioned the flitting appearance of Robin Costigan among the people on the high ground near the river: together with the words which the old beggar had whispered into his ear. He also informed them that the same whispering voice had, more than once, been near him during his trial in the court-house—though of that fact he could not

be quite sure, so confused was his brain on the occasion. He next gave an account of the boy who followed Robin Costigan, and whom he had himself seen, many years ago, in the shower of houses; and though he had not since encountered the imp, until this very day, still, he was convinced that it was the same boy, grown into somewhat matured years; and here Edmund recollected poor Mary Cooney's description not long ago, of the uninteresting youth: and he was convinced that it was the very same individual who had borne false testimony against him on his trial. And lastly, Edmund, after noticing Costigan's threats of vengeance against him in the shower of houses, and in poor Nick Mc Grath's bed-room, concluded by asserting his firm conviction that the old ruffian was not only the murderer of his wife, but also the contriver of his (Edmund's) arrest and condemnation for the atrocious act.

Father Connell, well recollecting the character of Robin Costigan, gave credence to Ned

Fennell's assertions and statements. And that the sentenced lad had, on the faith of the confession by which he prepared his soul for death and judgment, persisted in declaring his innocence, now also recurred, with great force, to Father Connell's mind.

The old gentleman seemed to ponder deeply, and most anxiously, for some moments. He suddenly arose from his seat, and moved rapidly to and fro within the narrow confines of the cell, his eyes winking quickly, and seeing nothing, to the often named accompaniment of the working of his fingers. He passed and repassed the clergyman and Ned Fennell, without seeming to notice the presence of either. As suddenly as he had started, almost jumped up, from the bedstead, he now stopped short before the door of the dungeon, and with his clenched knuckles gave one loud, authoritative knock against it. By the turnkey, who was stationed without, it was quickly opened. Not facing round to greet the convict, it was nearly in a race that he

gained the outer prison door, and emerged into the street. He walked along at his utmost speed, breathing shortly and in puffs, as much from eagerness as from haste. Soon turning his face to a door some little distance from the prison, he seized its knocker, and with it gave three blows that made the neighbourhood ring and echo again. The instant his summons was answered he pushed forward, without putting a single question to the wondering servant, mounted a flight of stairs before him, getting up two steps at a time, with almost the springyness of youth; flung open a door on the landing-place, and, without pause or apology, broke into a drawing-room, in which was seated a florid and very handsome little gentleman, surrounded by his family, to whom he was reading aloud. But, without any wish for stage effect, or of surprise, to the reader, it seems the more convenient plan now, to go back to Edmund Fennell's prison, before relating the old priest's further proceedings.

Scarcely had Father Connell left Edmund and his confessor alone, than another visitor entered the cell. It was Nelly Carty. Her step, manner and face, showed earnestness and anxiety. When she had passed the sentinel turnkey at the door, she suddenly turned round, and, with a scrutinizing frown, looked at him, from head to foot; but not seeming to gain anything by her investigation, she continued her hasty way close to the bedstead, upon which Edmund Fennell and his priest were sitting.

Having saluted them both, she again looked behind her, as if to note whether the door had been shut and secured. It had; and she addressed Edmund Fennell, in a very low whisper.

"You'll be wontherin' what brings me here, Masther Ned. It's great business, an' many kinds of business, that brings me here. I want to make enquiries of you," here she sunk her whisper even still lower—"I want to make de-

mand of you if a man wid a bit of ould black felt over his face, an' holes in id, fur his two eyes an' his mouth, is one of the jailers that comes in an' out to you, in this place?"

Edmund, surprised at her appearance, and her whole demeanour, and particularly at this question, answered that he could not distinctly tell whether such was the fact. The clergyman, however, clearly recollected that it was by a person so disguised he had been ushered into the prisoner.

"But," he resumed, "I did not suppose him to be a regular turnkey; from my former knowledge of the customs of the prison, I believed him to be a very different official."

"And your riverince was in the right," said Nelly Carty ominously nodding to him.

"My executioner," said Edmund Fennell, changing colour.

"He thinks as much," continued Nelly Carty, "bud he may be mistaken."

"Woman, what do you mean?" questioned

poor Edmund, trembling with the hope which these words seemed indirectly to convey.

"Do not dare," said the priest sternly, "to utter a syllable that may unfoundedly draw the mind of my penitent, from the blessed prospect of a speedy participation in the joys of Heaven."

"I won't, your riverince; an' yet, I'll answer your question, Masther Ned. Harken to me. Though I owe you no good will, for turning from Mary Cooney to another, I have heart enough left in my body, to relieve your mind from the terrible thought that is in it at present; from the fear of death on the gallows. Listen to me well I say. First of all, I can prove to the faces of the foolish judge and jury, who brought you in guilty of your own wife's murther this bless'd day—I can prove that it was not your wife's blood at all, nor a lock ov your wife's hair at all, that was found close by the river side; and is that news fur you, Masther Ned Fennell?"

Edmund could only clasp his hands, and gape and gasp for breath. The priest spoke for him.

"News, indeed, if true; but how can you prove it?"

"By a plain story, your riverince, that I will give my oath to, an' that another body, well known to Masther Ned, one Masther Tom Naddy, will give his oath to—and that another body too, will give *her* oath to—an' now I mane Mary—yes! my own, poor Mary!—it was you they left for dead by the river side—it was you, Masther Ned Fennell murthered, if he murthered any one, though you'll soon be well enough alive, plase God, to tell them what yourself knows about the matther! An' isn't that another sort of good news for you, Masther Ned?"

But Edmund did not answer; he had drooped his head upon the priest's shoulder. The fear of death had not unmanned him; the sudden reflux of hope now did.

Nelly Carty, at the clergyman's instance,

called at the door, for wine and water, and other refreshments, and Edmund partook of them, and quickly recovered. Nelly Carty was then urged to be more explicit, and she resumed.

She told of her meeting with Costigan, on the high road, the previous night ; of her hunting him off the road, down towards the river side ; of her then racing into the town, to find Mary Cooney, and keep her out of his way ; of her failure in this intention, by Mary's absence from Father Connell's house ; of a resumed and lengthened search after the poor girl ; of wandering here and there almost the whole night ; of her taking the path by the river side about an hour before day break ; and of there discovering the body of Mary, murdered, she believed, at the first glance, by Robin Costigan.

" Yes !" the half wild woman went on, " the bright blessed moon shone down upon her, and showed her to me stiff an' cowld, an' covered wid her own blood—and her own blood was all

round about her. Well, I knelt down in that blood—in my own child's blood—aye, ye may start an' look at me, but my own *colleen* she is, an' I'll prove that forenent ye, along wid all the rest—so, in her blood I knelt down—look, 'tis on my clothes yet; an' look here too." She held wide asunder the heavy grey locks on her forehead, and showed upon it a cross, rudely marked—"here is some of id agen—I made that with it here, an' then I swore an oath, that day or night I would not sleep nor stand still, nor ate nor dhrink until I could find out the murtherer ov my darlin,' an' dhrag him to the gallows' foot! An' though it turned out that he did not murther her, as he bid fair to do—I'll do it yet!" she muttered. "I'll keep that oath yet.

"A man come towards me in the moonshine, runnin' hard, an' whin I saw him first I thought it might be Robin Costigan, comin' back to hide his work, an' I jumped up on my feet, an' sarched fur the knife. Bud it was only Tom

Naddy, racing frum Gaby Mac Neary's house, to look afther his young misthress, as he tould me, on a promise he gave her whin her father turned her out that night; bud he was hours too late, he said, by rason that his ould masther kep him employed, a'most the livelong night, goin' up an' down stairs, to his bed-room, an' back agen.

"Tom Naddy stood by me side, whisperin'; he was terribly frightened at the sight under his eyes, an' he thrembled and shook; an' the grief sthruck him too, an' as I cried down the bitther tears, he cried along wid me; he tould me he loved Mary—och, who didn't! I asked him to help me an' carry her corpse away, an' hide it frum Robin Costigan until we could bury id, in Christian ground. He said he would, if I'd let him look round about us fur his own poor young misthress, who, he had fears, was murthered, too. I b'lieved the same thing, bud it throubled me little—how could it! He came back to me, afther goin' up every

risin' ground, an' lookin' over every path, bud findin' no trace of the person he wanted to see; bud, in a little hollow on the hill side, over the river, there was a cloak of hers, an' a bonnet, an' bundle. So he said no more about her fur that time, bud he stooped down to help me to lift the corpse, an' I went to the feet, an' he went to the head; an' as he stooped over her, Tom Naddy gave a little start, an' tuk off his hat, an' put his ear close to the spot over her heart, an' tuk id away agen, an' held id close agen.

"Tom Naddy," I said, "what is your manin'? Mother o' Heaven! what is your manin'?"

"'This girl isn't dead,' he said, jumping up, 'come here, an' feel her heart.'

I screeched out, until the river banks, up an' down fur miles, hard me! I ran to my darlin's head. I knelt agen, and bent down—oh, by the blessed light! a little, sorrowful sigh, like, stole out frum between her lips, as my cheek

touched them. Tom Naddy flew to the river and cum back wid water in his hat, an' we threw id upon her face, and we put some dhrops of id into her mouth, an' the life gave more an' more signs, all over her. Yis! the life, the life! my darlin' wasn't murthered! My darlin' was not dead! Wasn't gone for ever frum me!

"I don't know what I said or did—bud I lost my senses, I b'lieve, fur a while. Bud Tom Naddy made me come back to myself, an' bring to mind that now, in earnest, we ought to take her an' hide her frum Robin Costigan; and so we did.

"Nigh at hand, undher the river's bank, there was a little boat, that Gaby Mac Neary and his daughther used to take their pleasure in, whin the summer evenin's ud be fine; and Tom Naddy had the kay of the chain that made the little boat fast by the bank, an' he knew where the oars were hid; an' we soon laid my darlin' in the bottom ov the little boat,

an' put the river between her an' Robin Costigan. An' at the other side ov the river, where the weir crosses it, there is a mill—a very high, tall mill, six lofts high, a flour mill; an' the miller's wife, an' myself were related, an' we used to be friends in the pleasant days of my girlhood, long ago, afore I fell into sin, an' lost every friend I had, along wid everything else, barrin' the sorrow an' the shame that the sin brought; bud she spakes to me yet, now and then, an' gives me a handful of pyaties, like the other good neighbours; an' so, we knocked at the mill dour, and Anty Murphy got up,—that's my gossip's name—whin I tould her my story, every word, and that I wanted to hide my child frum Robin Costigan; an' she asked her husband, an' he let us; an' then, Tom Naddy and I, and Anty Murphy's good man, we all took Mary out ov the boat, an' we carried her up all the step-laddhers, over all the shaky lofts, one afther another, until we had her in the top loft ov all; an' there we made her a

little bed, an' Anty helped me to wash an' to dhress the wounds on her poor head; an' I sat down, to be my darlin's nurse; an' they all swore to me that no livin' crature bud myself should know that Mary was there, or was alive, or what had become of her, until I could quit her side, an' go my own way, to see her rightified, and to keep her frum harum, for the futhure. An' the miller promised that he would watch the mill dour well, an' keep off every sthranger; an' that he would put a great, big wicked dog, at the feet ov the first step ladder, so that the black divil himself, in Robin Costigan's shape, couldn't go up a step ov it, widout gittin' lave.

"My darlin' was now sleepin' soft, an' Tom Naddy an' I had a word about his poor young misthress; an' afther tellin' him to the best of my knowledge where to go look fur her, he gave one look at Mary, an' went his ways, to go in quest of her.

"The moon now began to go down in the

sky, to make room fur the mornin' that was comin' in her place; an' I was sittin' by my child's head, my heart full ov blessed hope, an' my eyes fixed on her face. She moaned mournfully, an' stirred, an' dhrew a long, long breath, an' then woke, an' opened her eyes, like the dawn ov the day on me, an' knew me—knew me the first look! Bud I wouldn't let her spake a word, nor stir a fut nor a hand. No, I wouldn't even spake a word to her myself; only I knelt down, an' I kissed her lips and her cheeks, an' her poor sore head, over an' over; an' gave her something good fur her to dhrink, that my cousin left to my hand; an' thin, Mary soon shut her beautiful eyes agen, an' fell into another doze.

"Fur hours that she slept, I still watched her, bud at last stole to a little window in the gable of the mill, to open it, an' give her some air; for the sun began to shine sthrong upon the slates above our heads, an' it was very hot on the little ould loft. So I opened the window,

and looked across the river, towards the spot where we found my darlin.' Near that spot, undher the high bank, there was a man standin' in the shallow wather, like as if he was hidin.' I thought he looked up at the mill, an' thin hard at me. I dhrew back, bud only so as that I could still look at him. An' long an' well I looked; bud that man was not Robin Costigan. Bud I soon knew who he was. He turned the side ov his face to me, ov a sudden, an' thin I knew him. He used to be a great crony of Robin's, an' was one of his own picked men. I wonthered very much to see him there. I still looked over to him, an' came back close to the open window. He cast his eyes up agen an knew me in his turn, an' beckoned hard an' fast to me. I went quite away frum the window, an' my heart sunk down widin me, an' I was terribly afeard. It came into my mind that Robin Costigan had found out, by manes that no one else bud himself could, that my poor

Mary was alive still, an' had sent this man to watch her fur him—an' oh, I then eyed her asleep afore me, an' I wrung my hands, an' I cried, cried, widout sayin' a word, or makin' a sound, till I thought the heart ud bust into bits in my body.

" A little time afther, my cousin Anty came up the step laddher, to tell me that a man wanted to see me, outside the mill dour, an' wouldn't go away widout seein' me, bud fur no harum she thought, only fur somethin' very sarious; fur he said there was life an' death in id—aye, twenty lives an' deaths in id. I gave her a pictur, as well as I could, of the ould robber—it wasn't him. I went to the window agin—the man I saw afore, across the river, wasn't there now—more betoken, Anty tould me that the man at the mill dour cum across the weir, to ask fur me; an' afther a moment's more thought, on the head ov it, I left Anty to watch my darlin', an' went down to meet Dinnis

Keegan, the wickedest comarade that Robin Costigan ever had; bud I didn't find him so wicked now. A change was upon him.

"Along wid all the rest that ever knew her or saw her, Molocth had the love on his heart for my poor Mary, ever since she was a weeny child; an' the spillin' of her blood changed his heart an' his mind intirely agen Robin Costigan—aye, an' agen Robin Costigan's bad ways, an' his own bad ways; an' he made a vow to quit him an' them. An' larnin' frum Robin that he meant to send him an' the others that came to help him, in murthering poor Mary, far away, an' stay alone himself near the spot, where she was left for dead, the thought came upon Molocth that Costigan wanted to watch her, an' be sure that not a spark of the life staid in her, or, if it did, to rise his hand to her agen; and fur this rason, he turned back frum the others, in a little time, to watch the ould robber, in his turn. Another thing made him curious. He saw Costigan takin' the ould hat

from the Babby's head, afore they parted; an' then he stole on him, where he was sittin' a one side, cuttin' the ould hat into the shape of a *skibbeah's* mask, an' at this, he obsarved him closer an' closer.

" An' whin Dinnis Keegan come back to the river side, he saw him standin' near the place where they had left poor Mary—bud she wasn't to be seen then. An' afterwards, he saw him hidin' until people come up in the grey ov the dawn, an' gethered round the bloody spot; an' thin he saw all about you, Masther Edmund, an' the part Costigan took in id. The people dhragged you to the town, and Costigan was wid them still; and still Dennis followed them an' him. Whin they all come into the town, great was his wondher to see his ould Masther quit the crowd, an' put on his skibbeah's mask, in a lane forenent the jail dour; an' thin cross over to the dour, an' knock at it, an' go in. Bud he sooned larned the manin' ov that turn of ould Robin's. It was well known that there was no

hangman in town to do the work that he b'lieved would soon be ready on Gallow's Green; the sheriffs were at a great loss, an' in a great pucker, fur fear they'd be forced to do id thimselves ; an' so, out ov the ould love he bears you Masther Edmund, an' moreover, to hide himself for a little while, in the last place in the world, where people ud come to look fur him, an fur that rason, in the best place, Robin Costigan is undher one roof wid you to-night."

Many had been the interruptions on the part of Edmund and the clergyman, to this narration of Nelly Carty ; and now Edmund broke out, shuddering, in exclamations of horror and disgust ; not yet unmixed with fear even. He also expressed great surprise at the last circumstance mentioned by the potato-beggar.

" It is indeed very strange," said the clergyman, " but not so very unusual. To my own recollection, it has happened more than once before, that a man in a black mask has offered himself at the jail door, as executioner for an

approaching event; and after stipulating that his name should not be asked, and that to guard against public exposure, he should wear his mask till the matter was ended, his proffered services have been accepted; and after the affair, and after receiving a heavy fee, he has gone abroad into the world again, no one knowing anything more about him."

The cell door was here again opened, and Father Connell re-entered in great and agitated haste, followed by our smiling, handsome little gentleman. A small table being provided, the latter sat down to it, deliberately put on his spectacles, and drew from his pocket, pens, an ink bottle, and very professional paper, smiling all the while most kindly and complacently. In fact, he was an attorney, a great friend of Father Connell, and he had come under the old priest's guidance, to make notes from Edmund Fennell's own declarations, for a memorial, to be presented to the Lord Lieutenant, praying a respite of Edmund's

sentence, beyond the forty-eight hours specified by the "hanging judge," to enable the condemned lad to establish his innocence.

The powerful additions made to Edmund's case, since Father Connell had left the prison, were now heard with great joy by the old clergyman, and with great satisfaction by the attorney. Father Connell even went so far as to presume that they were sufficient to procure Edmund's immediate liberation, without having recourse to the memorial at all.

But the smiling solicitor shook his head. They supplied only additional reasons, he said, why the memorial should be proceeded with; they made it stronger, and greatly increased the chance of its success. Yet, strong as they were, they did not afford such legal and palpable proof of Edmund's innocence, as to authorize the local authorities not to proceed in the execution of the law's sentence. Besides, he whispered to the two clergymen, that the time was now perilously short; and accidents might

happen on the road; or the Lord Lieutenant might not at once be seen. And in fact, he concluded, the attempt to murder Mary Cooney did not disprove the evidence on the trial that Edmund had murdered Helen Mac Neary; that lady must be forthcoming, in order to have the fact demonstrated, and therefore the memorial ought to be prepared, and forwarded with all despatch.

"The young lady is alive, an' I hope well," here observed Nelly Carty in a whisper to Father Connell, "one towld me as much, sence I sent Tom Naddy to look fur her; but God knows whin Tom can have her to the fore; an' fur that rason, your riverince, let the attorney begin his writin'."

Fully convinced, and now more anxious than ever, Father Connell urged his friend to complete his task. Poor Edmund observed the demur among them all, and again changed colour. The attorney did not take a long time to finish his notes. Father Connell and he

were then hastily leaving the cell—the former almost dragging out his methodical friend. So earnest was his hurry, that he crossed the threshold without taking leave of Edmund Fennell.

" Will you not give me your blessing, sir, before you go," said Edmund.

Father Connell paused, and turned round. Edmund was upon his knees. He hastened to him, and assumed the same position.

" Kneel down, kneel down," he said, slowly and impressively motioning to the other clergyman, to his professional friend, and also to Nelly Carty, who remained in the most distant corner of the cell; " and kneel down," he continued to the stern looking man who had opened the dungeon door for his departure; and who now stood upon its threshold. He was obeyed by all. He had not spoken loudly to them, but there was a patriarchal authority in his low toned command, and so all knelt. Then he laid his hat beside him on the floor,

strained his eyes upward, and stretched his arms to their full length above his head. And he prayed in the same suppressed inward voice in which he had issued his command to those around him.

"Lord of justice and of mercy, mercifully hear our humble supplications this night! If it be your holy will to take this boy out of the world, even now, in the vigour of his first youth; grant to him, we beseech thee, that he may be enabled to prepare for meeting Thee face to face—Thee his August and Heavenly judge!"

He placed the palms of his hands on Edmund's bowed head, as he continued, "the blessing of God be upon you, and with you, my child, amen;" and the *amen* echoed by those who knelt around, if not loud, was heartfelt.

Without rising from his place, the ancient priest allowed his hands to fall on the shoulders of him for whom he prayed, and he laid his

cheek close to that of the sentenced prisoner. For a little while he remained silently thus, and the lookers on could perceive that he wrestled, almost till he shook, with his strong sorrow. At length he suddenly arose; three times made with his open hand the sign of the cross over his adopted son, and again caressing him cheek to cheek, whispered in his ear—

"Now God be with you, Neddy, my poor child—God be with you," and before Edmund could command words to express his feelings, Father Connell had hastened with his professional friend to the remote outside door of the prison, commanding the turn-key, who was in attendance, to follow and open it for him.

In the mean time the head jailer or governor of the dreary abode appeared at Edmund's cell door.

"What is this," he asked, "long passed prison hours and strangers yet in the prison? I beg your pardon, sir," he continued turning to Edmund's confessor, "I could not mean you—

you are, of course at liberty to remain as long as he and you like with the poor young gentleman; but—come here friend, Mask!" he went on, calling through the open door up the passage which crossed it, "come here and put this stranger out of the jail."

The person addressed entered from the darkness without, like a summoned familiar—"remove her from the cell," continued the governor, pointing to Nelly Carty.

"He'll niver do that," answered the potatoe beggar—"but do you lock the cell dour well, Misther jailer, an' mind what I'm goin' to say!" her directions were instantly obeyed; she flew at the man in the mask, and stuck in him like a wild cat; he struggled hard with her; but she succeeded in tearing off the disguise from his face, as she shrieked out—"look at him now, an' well!—this is the man that spilt the blood by the river side last night—blood that Master Edmund Fennell never stained his hands in—never had to do with—and that I'll

prove! I'll prove!—and this is the man that thought to rob ould Nick Mc Grath's house a little while ago, an' thought to set it o' fire—saize him an' hould him fast, Misther jailer! hould him fast, or a near crony of his will whip him off from you, while you're not dhraming about it! he broke this jail afore now, when ye thought ye had him safe for the gallows, for stealing Tom Hefferman's cow—ay, an' after ye thought that ye hanged him well, for stealing the widdy Murphy's horse! hould him fast, Misther jailor!—good night, Robin," she added—"I'll meet you at the gallows' fut agen, plase God."

CHAPTER XIV.

Father Connell and the solicitor walked away from the prison, towards the house of the latter, the old priest holding his head very high, and clawing his friend's arm, upon which he leaned, at a great rate. To many questions from his companion, he remained quite silent—in fact he did not hear them. Being however closely pressed, by repeated queries, as to the messenger he intended to send to Dublin, with the memorial, and having at length, heard and understood what was demanded of him, he replied that he would take charge of it thither

himself. Into the hands of no other living creature, would he intrust it. There was no other living creature loved Neddy Fennell so well, and no other could so well perform the necessary duties required by the exigencies of the case.

The attorney pondered, and came to the conclusion, that his venerable companion was right. They arrived at the attorney's house, and entered his office. Although our good-humoured, and placid friend knew perfectly well that expedition was now of all things necessary, yet, were his habits of systematic proceeding not to be overturned. He sat down to make a fair draft of the memorial, with all his usual precision and deliberation. He arranged his facts methodically; selected his words carefully; duly and slowly read over his rough draft, now thus amended, measured a margin on the paper for his second draft, and determined the distance that was to be observed between its lines, as if the human life at stake

depended upon the technical correctness of the document.

All this while our poor Father Connell was in a fever of anxiety. His professional friend had provided him with an arm chair, and smiling most imperturbably, requested him to occupy it. But the old man could not sit still. He would start up and pace about; glance eagerly at the slow, though sure, progress of the attorney; drop sitting for a while; again start up; try to look at some good prints, which were upon the walls of the apartment; start away from them, and more hastily than before, pace about in every direction; glance again and again at the writer at the desk, and force himself barely to suppress exclamations of impatience to be gone. But it was beyond the eleventh hour of the night before he at length placed the important paper in the side pocket of his jock coat.

"Now how do you intend to travel, Father Connell?" asked his friend.

This point had not previously occurred to our parish priest, in his thoughtful abstractions, although more important ones had. He paused a moment, and answered—" on horseback—it was on horseback he always journeyed, and he was a good horseman."

" Very true, sir ; every one knows that; but I fear your sedate bay mare would find an uninterrupted journey of sixty Irish miles, and necessarily, a hasty journey too, beyond her powers of performance."

" And I believe so," muttered Father Connell, in a dilemma.

" You must take a post-chaise, sir," continued the attorney ; " there is no stage coach, nor mail coach to set out from this town until to-morrow —a post-chaise it must be."

The old priest assented, and they parted. There were now little more than thirty six hours left, for going to Dublin, for presenting the memorial, and for coming back ; and, the

distance, going and coming, was one hundred and twenty long Irish miles. The Inn where Father Connell should engage a post-chaise, was on his way to his own house. When he reached it, its doors were closed, and no lights to be seen in its windows. Father Connell knocked loudly; he was not answered. Again and again and again; the same result. He hurried into the middle of the street, and gazed eagerly towards the black windows, for a gleam of a light; no such thing was to be seen; he regained the door, and listened with bent head, to catch the sound of a footstep within the house; no such thing was to be heard. Knock, knock, knock, knock; silence. Often and often did he pray to God to grant him patience, and to strengthen him. Nearly one whole precious hour thus wore away; and all the while, it rained heavily upon his fevered and heated body. At length, in answer to a tremendous assault of his heels upon the door, a voice was heard

speaking within, and calling on others, in no very gentle accents, to stir themselves and get up. Father Connell ceased knocking, and awaited the opening of the door. But the loud voice within ceased too; and once more there was dead silence, and the door was not opened. All the tired inmates of the inn were, in fact, in their first sound sleep of the night. Our priest had nothing for it but go to his old work over again, which, indeed, he did, to the very utmost of his strength and power.

A window was thrown up; a bitter curse flung at him, and a sleepy growling voice demanded—"why the devil he made such a racket at that hour?"

In a tone of absolute entreaty, nay, humility, Father Connell made his business known. He was answered that no post-chaise could be had at such an unseasonable hour of the night; and the speaker wondered exceedingly, in his very heart and soul, how any one could even think

of such a thing; the horses had all come home late, tired from the road; and the post-boys had all gone to their homes and their beds, long ago, and it was a shame, and a "burnin'" shame, to disturb honest people, in the dead of night, in such manner; and such a night too—cold, and blowing, and pelting rain—it was a scandalous shame.

"I beseech and pray of you, for the love of Heaven," said Father Connell, "do not refuse me—it is a matter of life and death—do not refuse, and may God reward you!"

A petitioner is seldom thought much of. He was told that he ought to be in his own bed, instead of being out in the rain, on a dark piercing night, saying his prayers in the middle of the street.

"Get me a post-chaise at once, I command you!" the old man now cried out, stung perhaps by the sarcasm, while he was tormented by the delay.

The speaker's tone immediately changed.

Enquiry was made who wanted the vehicle? Father Connell gave his name. Many and profuse apologies followed. The speaker disappeared; in a little time, the landlord and the waiter opened the door, and a promise was given that the best post-chaise in the establishment should be at the priest's door, in a few moments.

The priest made enquires as to the probable amount of the expenses of a journey to Dublin and back again. He learned in reply, that, by post-chaise conveyance, they would amount nearly to twelve or thirteen pounds. He was astounded. Ever since he had become a parish priest, indeed, during his whole long life, so large a sum, belonging to himself, had not once been in his possession. He thrust his hands into his pockets; they contained a few shillings; and he hastened home in dismay, to search the little quaint-looking old desk in his bed-room, full of sad misgivings that his quest would be profitless.

His housekeeper, who, on his return from the country, that evening, was the first to acquaint him with the calamity that had occurred, now met him with eyes swollen and bloodshot from crying all the day and night; and her air of self importance was quite forgotten, as (the big tears running in a continuous stream down her unfeminine face) she looked into the haggard and care-worn countenance of her old master.

"Yes, my poor Peggy," he said, endeavouring to gulph down the sorrow, which, in spite of his utmost efforts, began, at this sight, to master him:—"yes, my poor Peggy, you loved the boy as I loved him, and your heart is full as well as my own—" he pressed the housekeeper's rough hands in his, while, for the first time that night, the tears now ran from his own old eyes, as they encountered her's. But very shortly he recovered and re-manned himself.

By his directions the housekeeper followed him into his bed-room. Here he acquainted her

with the almost established fact of Ned Fennell's innocence; and how the poor woman now again wept, but triumphantly! It had been, too, her own firm belief, all through, notwithstanding the decided opinions to the contrary, pronounced by all the comforters who had visited her during the day and night, and will she not be allowed a little egotistical exultation on that account also?

She entered fully into the spirit of the aged clergyman, regarding his present expedition; and gleams of hope began to break in upon her despairing grief. So, while the priest unlocked and searched his desk, Mrs. Molloy busied herself in packing up a change of attire for him; but she could barely refrain, even in his and her distress, from giving vent, while doing so, to her customary remarks on his extravagance, as she surveyed the few inner garments, most of them patched, and re-patched, which constituted his present stock. She did refrain, however, as she glanced at his changed face, and shivering

frame; and oh, often and often, to the end of her life afterwards, had Mrs. Molloy to bless God that she had done so, and that her whole conduct and speech had been studiously, and indeed, unusually respectful to the old gentleman, on this sad eve of their parting.

Father Connell rummaged his sarcophagus. He alighted upon a parcel well wrapped up, and secured with twine. It certainly contained money, and it was weighty too. But, there was a label upon it, in his own hand writing, which declared—

"This money belongs to the charity school —£50."

We have seen Father Connell at something like his present occupation, before now. Upon that occasion he did trespass, to the extent of a few shillings, upon a fund, over which he had willed himself to have no controul; and having found some difficulty in quickly restoring even the trifle then abstracted from it, he had made a solemn vow never again to be guilty of a like

peculation. So this parcel was put aside. He found another, a smaller one, tied up with equal care, but it was labelled too—

"This money belongs to the poor of the parish—£17."

A third, and it announced—

"This money belongs to Mary Cooney—given to me, for her personal wants and necessities by Neddy Fennell."

The future probable lot of the poor beggar-girl struck upon his mind, and this parcel also quickly fell from his hand.

He took between his finger and thumb the ring of a very little drawer, on which was written—

"This contains my own money."

He pulled the drawer open; within it were thirteen shillings in silver, and a few half-pence.

He sighed, and looked very sorrowfully at his little drawer; counted the silver over and over again; raised up and laid down the money for the school, and the money for the poor, and

the money for Mary Cooney; and then he walked rapidly lengthways and crossways through his little bedchamber.

The post-chaise rattled at the outer door. He returned to his desk; a second time took up the three parcels, one after the other, a second time put them down, and bent his head almost in despair. His housekeeper had left the apartment without his observation. He now felt her ponderous hand upon his arm. She drew him to a small table to one side, and emptied thereon the stocking in which she had stored the savings of her whole life, and addressed him.

"God help you, fur a poor fool of a man," she was going to say, but she checked herself, and proceeded in an amended form—"God help you fur a charitable crature ov a man, an' how could you have money, an' all the world dhragging id frum you? Take that, an' use id, and spend id to save my poor warm-hearted boy—him that I'd give the blood frum my veins to

save, not to talk o'money: take id in, in the name ov God; an' may he keep you, an' guard you, an' prosper you, in your journey."

Father Connell looked at his housekeeper in surprise and admiration. He paused; she urged him more and more.

"Peggy, Peggy," he answered, "I will take your money, then; and if you are not paid it back, Peggy, in this world—if anything should happen to me upon the road, going or returning, Peggy—it will be a store for you, multiplied ten times ten fold, in a better world. May my blessing, Peggy, and the blessing of the Lord, be with you, and about you."

The stocking had contained more than Father Connell deemed necessary for his expedition. He entered on a slip of paper, the exact sum he believed he should want, marking it as borrowed from Mrs. Molloy; placed this docket in his little drawer, appropriated the silver the drawer held, and closed his desk.

As he descended the stairs, towards the post-chaise, Mrs. Molloy again encountered him.

"You're lookin' very sick intirely, sir," she said, "an' you're in a could thremblin';—take this frum me afore you lave me."

"I will indeed, Peggy; I will indeed; and I give you my hearty thanks besides, for thinking of it; you are a good creature, Peggy; and indeed I wanted this; it was very thoughtful of you, Peggy."

The housekeeper had handed the old priest a mug of warmed spiced ale, he drank it eagerly; alas, he said but the truth, when he told her he wanted it. He handed her back the mug. He gazed into her hard features; bade her farewell, reverently and affectionately; descended to the little yard; gave one look around at the old place, and up the little garden, and then stept into his post-chaise, and after a clattering bang-to, of its door, was whirled off on his journey.

An old mitten dropt from his hand, as he ascended the vehicle. When the chaise was out of sight, Mrs. Molloy took it up, kissed it and closed her hand and fingers hard upon it; and she kept it afterwards as a precious treasure, until her dying day.

CHAPTER XV.

After the departure, from the condemned cell, of the old priest, the good-natured attorney, Nelly Carty, and the head jailer, Edmund Fennell's spiritual friend, still remained with him. It was the object and effort of this gentleman now to wean Edmund's mind from any dependence upon the favourable circumstances which had recently occurred, between him and his sentenced lot, and once more to fix his whole soul upon the prospect of confronting, within a few measured hours, his eternal judge. This he did gradually and impercepti-

bly, but successfully; dwelling upon all the hopes held out, he argued from them, even as Edmund's legal adviser had done, that they were not so certain as the fact that the sentence of the law should take its course, if the very personal appearance of Helen Mac Neary did not occur to interrupt it. And by degrees Edmund's mind and spirit followed the arguments of the good clergyman; and in profoundest awe, and not without an occasional dash of wholesome fear, he at length brought himself to contemplate, almost exclusively, the tremendous subject of the change from life to eternity, through the gates of death, and the vastness, and the mightiness, and the mystery of a meeting with his Maker.

At about one o'clock in the morning, the clergyman bade him a temporary farewell, and Edmund was alone with his own thoughts—a prayer-book in his hand, to which his eye often reverted.

His attention became distracted by a sudden and great tumult on the outside of the prison.

There was a thundering and battering at the iron-sheeted door, and a clamour of many voices, over all of which, one voice, which Edmund thought he should know, pre-eminently bellowed. Then he heard the voices, evidently in the interior of the jail, and much confused tramping and stamping, and shuffling and dragging, near to him, and at a distance. Presently silence ensued. But the door of his dungeon was shortly afterwards unlocked, and Tom Naddy made his appearance.

Edmund Fennell had extended his hand to greet Tom's entrance, but he held it back, upon perceiving what, under the circumstances, he could not avoid considering, as an unnatural and brutal levity, on the part of his old acquaintance. Tom's hat was quite out of his general mode of wearing that appendage—considerably to one side of his head, and fixed, indeed, in an absolutely rakish position; an unrestrained broad grin ran over his face, and he was really, and truly, and heartily, and loudly whistling, a jig air at intervals. Besides his usual cautious

carriage, he assumed, too, as much of a swagger as his size and proportions permitted.

" Well Masther Ned," said Tom, " an' how goes oats to-day ?"

Edmund gazed at him, not in anger, but in great disgust.

" Very bad accommodations they give here, Masther Ned, considering that they make people put up their quarthers in id, agen the grain."

So utterly had Ned Fennell been absorbed in the contemplation of unearthly matters, that his mere human reason proved dull, for a moment, to the meaning, which, in a more disengaged frame of mind, he must have attached to Tom's buffoonery.

" You have absented yourself," he said, " all through my misery, and are you now come to insult me ?"

" No, Masther Ned, I am not," answered Tom Naddy, now showing, by his tones and manner, that he *could* feel—" bud I have news

to tell you, that 'ill—" and he resumed his waggery—" that 'ill make you put that good book in your pocket, until day break, at laste."

Edmund began to apprehend. He gaped, he stared, he clasped his hands:—

" Well ?—do not trifle with me one moment !"

" Masther Ned, I won a wager ov two ould golden guineas from you afore now; I have them two guineas yet—an' I'll bet you the same two agen ten more, that 'ill make you caper about this cursed hole ov a place—aye—an' afore you're much oulder—like a young filly through a clover field."

" Tom !" was all Edmund Fennell could say, as he grasped tightly the fellow's arm.

" Aye, faith—cover-the-buckle it must be, by the piper that played afore Moses."

" My wife—Tom—my wife !"

" Brave an' hearty, she thanks you kindly—would you like to see her, Masther Ned ?"

Tom knocked at the dungeon door, and the

next instant Helen Mac Neary was embraced by her young husband. A description of their meeting shall not be attempted, by its present incompetent historians.

" By the great Gog, he's fond of her shure enough, poor fellow," said Gaby Mac Neary, who, unheeded by Edmund Fennell, had been looking on; and who, as he spoke, put his hand to his throat, as if to force down something which he felt stuck in it.

" Edmund, dear Edmund," whispered Helen, " my father—my father is present."

" Your father, Helen?" He gazed stupidly around him. " Excuse me, sir," he said—" I did not indeed know that you were here."

" By Gog, you puppy, that's plain enough, and divil a much you care if I was in Dingle-dee-cooch, if you spoke the truth."

" Sir, sir, your presence makes me hope that I am the happiest creature the day ever dawned on—it makes me hope, sir, you forgive me."

"What would be the use in laying this stick on your shoulders, until I broke it in pieces, as I ought to do? Confound the baggage, she would'nt quit you now if I were to go whistle jigs to a milestone for it."

"He forgives us fully, dearest Edmund, and he loves us fully," whispered Helen.

"Sir," continued Edmund, while he and his bride knelt to old Gaby—"you will find me a grateful son; if ever I give you, or my darling Helen, cause to regret your great kindness; I pray that He who now blesses me so exceedingly, may punish me in proportion."

"Your hand here, you damned puppy. After all, I ran away with her mother, myself; blug-a-bouns! could I expect that she would'nt have the ould drop in her, got at both sides of the house? There shake hands, and let there be an end to it. There's only one thing I'll ask from you, you young rascal."

"Anything sir—anything that I can promise or perform—only name it."

" Read your recantation,—pitch Popery and holy water to ould Nick, and go to church, like a dacent, honest fellow.—Blug-a-bounkers! is it laughing at me *you* are, you cross-grained cur?" he exclaimed digressively, as he turned hastily round to Tom Naddy, and gave him such a tap on the head with his bludgeon, as caused Tom to cringe, and rub hard the affected part—" By Gog alive, I'll crack your crown in pieces, before you're much older—hah! take that, and the devil be your apothecary; 'twas you brought all this about, you brat; I know the whole of it," he continued, re-addressing his son-in-law—" the grinning monkey had the impudence to tell me every word about it, and did'nt seem a bit afraid neither;—'twas he schemed out this marriage between ye—and damn my buttons if ever I'd forgive the pair of ye, only that it was that whelp's doing, and not your own—hah, hah, hah! by the boot, but 'twas a good joke for all that, " stumping about in great glee,"—he laid

you a wager of two guineas that Helen would be married in a week—you thought the wager was that she should be married to creeping Dick Stanton; but the devil's bird there, to win his two guineas, worked his plan to marry her to yourself—never a better, hah, hah! Well, you brat, I'll give you your due—you're as cunning as old Bamff, the robber—every bit—hah, hah!—aye, by the great Gog—only 'twas that cur's doing, I'd never let ye within two acres of one another,—one or the other of ye."

"Now my dear father, you would, you would, even for my sake."

"Why mam," put in Tom Naddy, "he neither et, nor dhrank, nor slept, from the moment you left him, until he got you back again."

"By Gog you lie, you curmudgeon! I ate two legs of mutton, and I dhrank a dozen of port; and I snored so loud, that you'd hear me from Cork to Dublin. But you baggage, we'll

have no more fighting, and no more parting: and when that puppy of yours goes to church, as I said before, and comes home an honest Protestant, we'll be as happy as the day is long. But don't think that *you'll* escape me, you mongrel — I'll thrash you within an inch of your life, every day in the week—and by Gog you should never enter my doors, you brat, only you're the very fellow that has made us all so happy—holloo! abroad there!" he thundered at the cell door with his bludgeon; the head jailer appeared; he intimated that he was about to withdraw from the jail, and take his son-in-law, the prisoner, home with him; the man modestly demurred, stating that such a proceeding must occur formally, and that he could not risk his situation, to allow it to happen, in any other manner.

"Gog's-blug-an-ages! Don't you know who I am, man? And won't I be your warrant?"

The jailer did know very well, and no one

could respect Mr. Mac Neary, and the young lady, and the young gentleman, more than he did: but—

Gaby Mac Neary blustered again, and even raised his stick; all was useless; the man was firm, though not offensive; and until a reasonable hour in the morning, Mr. Mac Neary could not expect to remove Mr. Fennell from the prison.

"Then we'll all stay where we are, till a reasonable hour in the morning, by the great Gog! an' you must give us a good table and chairs here—d'ye hear me, sir? And you must send somebody—here Naddy you brat, you'll do the business—gallop off to my house, and bring up here the cold sirloin that I left almost as good as new to-day; and the two bottles of wine that you'll find on the parlour sideboard, and all the other things we want—and get all the help you can in the house to carry them with you—run, you starved brat!

Aye, by the great Gog! if we must stay here, till a reasonable hour in the morning, we'll make a morning of it!"

The governor of the jail, with all his turnkeys and personal servants who were awake, supplied the chairs and tables ordered. Tom Naddy ran down the street, and almost ran back again, laden as he was, followed by one or two assistants, and the table was soon covered, and the chairs soon occupied; and never, from that time to this, or before, did such a revel, a "rolicking," take place, in a condemned cell. But it will be easily conceived that in all the loud or expressive portions of this merrymaking, Gaby Mac Neary and Tom Naddy were the most distinguished performers. Poor Helen, and poor Edmund sat side by side, hand in hand, almost cheek to cheek, and only speaking to each other in whispers, except when summoned by their chief to respond to some very emphatic question or burst of hilarity.

Tom Naddy was seated to one side of the

cell; and of course recounted how he had succeeded in discovering and recapturing Helen; how Nelly Carty's hints sent him to the exact place, the old ruined building, about twenty-five miles distant, and how Gaby Mac Neary's best horse enabled him to get there, almost as soon as the cart in which Helen was conveyed thither; how he quietly sought out a magistrate, told him his story, and with him and his constables, assisted by a score of the peasantry surrounded and invaded the old thieves' den; how, by Nelly Carty's directions, he was enabled, after much trouble, however, to discover the secret stone, which gave entrance to the secret vault; how, in it, they found and secured the "young misthress," the Babby, and two of his elder confederaters; how the magistrate lent Helen his carriage to convey her home to her father, and the "young masther;" while he, Tom Naddy, sat triumphantly on its dicky; and how, at the same time, the constables and the country people kept up with

the carriage, conveying to the jail now above their heads, well secured on a car, their detested prisoners. And Edmund understood that it was the disposing of these individuals against their will, in suitable lodgings in the prison, which had caused the most part of the startling noises that broke up his devotions.

The autumn morning crept in, even through the bars of Edmund's condemned cell. Nay, flickerings of pale sunlight, as if looking frightened, at having got into jail, followed the dawn. It became "a reasonable hour in the morning," and the governor of the prison ventured to re-appear and hint as much to Gaby Mac Neary. Gaby took home his daughter, remained absent about an hour, and then came back, and took home his son-in-law also—every formality having been gone through — the "hanging judge" himself, who had not yet left town, having been seen.

Prodigious was the breakfast, prepared under Gaby's roof. To repose he would not go, nor

let any one else go, until tea and coffee, eggs, and indeed, all viands within reach, should have laid the effects of his two bottles of wine, which, by the way, he and Tom Naddy had almost exclusively consumed between them. Then, his brain was full of another project, or, indeed, projects, to be immediately entered upon. Invitations were to be sent out, on a vast scale for a dinner and a supper, including a ball, and preparations to be instantly commenced for the tremendous revelry. So, amongst a hundred other things, he set Helen's pen to work on the invitations, and he would go himself and verbally deliver those which she could not be expected to write. And she and Edmund were to be remarried before dinner by a Protestant clergyman, and "blug-an'-ages! how could he forget so long?" Old priest Connell was to be at the dinner among the rest, aye, and among the first and the best; and he and Edmund would start that moment together to secure his company.

Edmund would go with his father-in-law delightedly, on such an errand. But before they left the house he fixed Gaby Mac Neary's attention to another subject, upon which he and Helen had been speaking much and anxiously. It was that of poor Mary Cooney. So, her relationship to Gaby was stated; and then, her history, her sufferings, her character, her late domestication in Father Connell's house, Helen's visit to her there, and then, her last night's sad and terrible adventures; her present sojourn in the old mill, under her wretched mother's care—everything was communicated to the astonished, the wondering, the pleased, the delighted, the cursing and swearing, the stumping, and the almost blubbering Gaby Mac Neary. He immediately dragged Edmund away with him.

As they walked through the streets of the town in great haste, arm in arm, how the thousand eyes of curiosity peered after them! And how many faces, which but yesterday,

had scowled upon Edmund as a disowned acquaintance, now turned to him, radiant with friendly smiles! Is it man's heart that spontaneously and genuinely gives to him generous feelings, or are those feelings which are only so called, first admitted to that heart under the keen inspection of his prudence, and his self-interest?

They went to Father Connell's house, and for the first time, Edmund learned that the old man had gone to Dublin the night before, to present personally the memorial in his own favour. His mind and heart gave a start—an utterly admiring, an utterly venerating—and he knew not why, an anxious and a fear-fraught start. He bent his head, and from that instant, was more thoughtful and sad than became his situation.

His companion urged him on to the old mill. Here Nelly Carty's story was ascertained to be true enough. Gaby wanted to see the poor beggar girl immediately; but prudence forbade

this, and they returned to the town, and sent back to her medical advice and assistance; and under her physician's permission, she was removed that very day, evening rather, to a commodious apartment, under Gaby's roof, where Helen received her as a sister indeed: where the master of the house under promise of keeping himself quiet, was allowed to give her a father's welcome; where Edmund Fennell once more took her hand as a brother, and where the poor Nelly Carty still continued as her head nurse. Happy Mary!

Edmund communicated to Helen the fact of Father Connell's journey to Dublin, and made her, by the intelligence, as sad, and as nervous as he was himself. But the materials for the mighty dinner, boiled and broiled, and roasted and stewed on; and they were ready to be set on the table, and the concourse who were to partake of them assembled. All the scholars of Dick Wresham's school, with all their wives, daughters, sisters, and so forth, and a great

many more of the aristocracy of the town, with their gentle appurtenances also; and in their presence, in the drawing-room, Helen and Edmund were remarried by the Protestant rector of the parish; and then the multitude trooped down to the feast; and mighty was the din and the clatter of plates and dishes, knives and forks, and of the laughing, talking, hob-nobbing, and over all, Gaby Mac Neary's bellowing to Tom Naddy.

"Throw open all the doors, street door and all," cried Gaby Mac Neary, "that we may hear the joy-bells I have set agoing."

In the steeple of the ancient cathedral of the city, there were four or five bells of good sizes and sounds, only that one of them was cracked, which occasionally rung out as joy-bells; and old Gaby had indeed set them in motion, on this happy day.

"There they go!" he continued, rubbing his hands, as after his instructions about opening the doors had been obeyed, the joy-bells

became partially heard from a distance, even amid the din of the dining-room; "there they go, jollily! But my curse on that passing bell from your Mary's steeple, Mr. Thomson," addressing the rector—"Who the divil is dead now, I'd be glad to know; some old lady in a faded black silk cloak, I suppose, that they're making all this fuss about—damn it! it comes strong on us again—Naddy you brat, shut all the doors now."

These orders were also obeyed, and, in consequence, the joy-bells indeed were no longer heard at the board of feasting; but Mary's steeple being much nearer, than the steeple of the old cathedral, the steady tolling of the passing bell, at measured intervals, could not be shut out.

Edmund and Helen exchanged looks not in sympathy with the bridal feast, and they, the bride and the bridegroom. It was a late dinner; the revellers had not sat to table, till nearly eight o'clock. About two hours had now

elapsed since then, and Helen stealthily retired to dress and prepare for accompaning her husband, almost immediately, to her father's little country villa, where they were to spend the remainder of the evening alone. Edmund sat silent and spiritless after she went away. Tom Naddy came to the back of his chair, and informed him that a messenger had been sent from his bishop, summoning him to an interview, on pressing and immediate business. He started, and turned pale, facing round to Naddy, and staring studiously into his eyes. The lad averted his glances, but Edmund saw that he had been weeping. He jumped up, and hurried out of the house to his bishop.

The dignitary met him gravely and sadly, though kindly. He had almost that instant received, he said, a letter, by dispatch, from the Catholic arch-bishop of Dublin, concerning Father Connell, in which the arch-bishop advised that Mr. Fennell should be consulted on the present occasion, in consequence of some

words that had escaped his old parish priest. The bishop went on to say that Father Connell had reached Dublin, about eight o'clock that morning, but in a very feverish, shattered, and exhausted state; that he had immediately called on his old friend, the arch-bishop,—before now, Catholic bishop of Edmund's diocese—to advise with him about waiting on the Lord Lieutenant; that the archbishop had recommended him first of all, to take repose and refreshment; but that Father Connell's great and devouring anxiety, rejected every such proposal; that almost on the instant, the writer was therefore obliged perforce to accompany him to the vice-regal lodge, in the Phœnix park, where he had the entrée; and finally, that Father Connell, while in the act of presenting on his knees, to the Lord Lieutenant, the memorial in Edmund's favor, had fainted, and very shortly afterwards died.

Edmund Fennell broke out of his bishop's house. He ran to an inn or hotel, and ordered

a post-chaise to be in instant readiness at his father-in-law's door. He flew home to Helen; found her dressed in her room, waiting for him to accompany her to her father's country cottage; told her the news, and saw her the moment afterwards insensible at his feet. He sent down for Gaby Mac Neary, and told him the news also. Gaby filled up with a great and true sorrow; and in a few minutes afterwards his guests were dismissed, his house shut up,—

"And the banquet-hall deserted."

The post-chaise arrived at the door; Edmund strained his bride to his breast; shook his weeping father-in-law by the hands; ran down stairs, jumped into the post-chaise, and was whirled out of the town, at a gallop. And this was his and Helen's second nuptial night.

It was the Catholic bishop who had sent to get the passing-bell tolled, in Mary's steeple.

CHAPTER XVI.

Edmund had learnt from the archbishop's letter, something more than has yet been noticed. According to it, Father Connell's last words were to the effect—"that his dying blessing, as a priest and a father, should be sent to Neddy Fennell; also information that he should like to be buried with the old parish priests, in their own old churchyard."

The archbishop added that, in obedience to these wishes of the dead, he had instantly ordered arrangements to be made for the transmission of the body, from Dublin; that at the moment he was writing, such arrangements

were actively going on; and that he hoped and expected that all would be on its way to its destination, about two or three o'clock that same day. And this was the particular intelligence, which sent Edmund so rapidly towards the metropolis.

Before daybreak, next morning, people might be seen walking slowly, in two's and three's at a time, towards the Dublin road—rich and poor, all classes, in alternation. No public intention had been made known on the occasion; but the news that the body might be expected to leave Dublin, at an hour already mentioned, got abroad, and this silent movement was the result.

A very great crowd had congregated about two miles from the town, and still the day had not dawned. The people timed their motions very well, calculating on the decent and slow progress which would be made from Dublin. Presently, the red glaring lamps of a vehicle, steadily approaching, appeared in view. Soon

after, the stepping of the horses was heard; and then the nodding of the plumes of the hearse, became visible, together with the white scarf and hatband of the driver. Up to this moment, there had been a death-like silence among the crowd, now there was one low outbreak, made up of the suppressed groans of men, and the wailing of women.

All heads were uncovered, and many knelt in reverence or in prayer.

The hearse passed by; two mourning coaches followed it. In the first of these, visible by the light of the lamps which it also bore, and muffled up to the brows in his mourning cloak, and without motion or a glance around him, sat Edmund Fennell. In the other, the people discerned, to their great delight and admiration the former bishop of their diocese; the former resident in Father Connell's little thatched house, and the former intimate and affectionate friend of the ancient priest. He was himself now a very old man.

There was a third vehicle, containing such of the near relations of Father Connell as had had time so to arrange as to go a little way to meet him, on his last earthly journey.

The sad little cortege moved slowly on. The great throng of people proceeded with it at either side, or closed behind it. Profound silence again reigned amongst them. Arrived at the suburbs of the town, very little way was to be made to Father Connell's late dwelling; and here the people left the hearse, and returned into the town. The morning came through clouds and mists upon the little city: but a moral gloom, deeper than that cast by the weather, also fell upon it. There was no man, woman, or child, among its population who was not acquainted with Father Connell's character, who did not venerate and love him when alive, and who did not now mourn him, dead. This assertion is literal; it makes no exception for social degree, or for sect, or for party. The glorious, and the great charity, in

the exercise of which he had spent a long, long life, and at last, braved and met death; the glorious and the great charity, which had been, as it were, the very essence, and the very breath of his being—that charity, now filling with admiration and affection all hearts, made all unite, for a time at least, in one demonstration of feeling. It was the pouring out of oil upon the spiteful though paltry waves of their sectarian personalities and passions, until it stilled them into a glassy stillness. And thus, charity begat charity. Their common love for one man, whom they loved, because he was charitable, made them also charitable in themselves, and to one another.

It was, and is the custom in Father Connell's town, for the shopkeepers partially to close their shop windows, upon the death of a neighbour. On this day, every shop-window was fully closed. Every passing bell tolled—the almost unheard, illegal little bells attached to Catholic chapels, and the more sonorous ones in

the legal church steeples. The citizens of every grade, met in little groups about the streets; and you could pass none of them, who were not talking in low voices of the man and the event, whom all mourned and deplored, and of arrangements to be made for a public funeral in his honour—and Protestant and Catholic discussed the subject together. And there was somehow, a strange silence through all places of usual public resort and bustle, which thrilled you; and few were seen to laugh during the day.

At about noon, hundreds after hundreds began to visit Father Connell's little chapel. There, upon an elevated frame-work, a kind of bier, they found, as they expected, his mortal remains, laid out in the coffin, in the middle of the building. The body was draped in it's priest's vestments, over all its usual clothes, and the semblance of a chalice was between it's hands—so are Catholic priests arrayed for the grave. A number of candles surrounded the

coffin.—The features of the corpse, wore their usual living smile; and the glittering benevolence of the handsome old blue eyes, was only wanting, to make it appear life indeed. Many, many who looked upon it, remembered it well as the blessed harbinger of consolation and relief to them, in former days of suffering and sorrow.

On the floor beneath, surrounding the coffin, were benches, on which sat the mourners of the dead—his nearest relations. But apart from the rest, immediately under the head of the body, stood one mourner who, though no one could see his features, on account of the arrangement of his black cloak, all knew well; and they knew that since the body had arrived from Dublin, he had never quitted it for a moment, tasting no food, no drink—partaking of no kind of refreshment—speaking with none, and addressed by none—for his mighty grief, and, the people believed, his remorse, was respected,

nay, almost feared, to an extent which made all loth to communicate with him.

There he remained, the livelong day, wordless and motionless, except that now and then, and very seldom, he would change his standing position for a sitting one. Night came on, and he was still on his post. Messages reached him from the good old archbishop, who had taken up his temporary residence in the priest's abode, near at hand, entreating, nay, commanding him, to leave the body for a time, and take some repose and nourishment—but he only answered these communications with a denying and most mournful motion of his head. His father-in-law, Gaby Mac Neary, being applied to, came personally, and even with requests from his young wife, to solicit him on the same subject; but these appeals also he scarcely heeded.

It grew far advanced in the night, and people shuddered to see him still continue almost alone to bear the dead company.

Next morning, at the earliest hour, that visitors began to come again to the chapel, the same figure was still seen, at the coffin head. The noon of the second day arrived; the archbishop, with the bishop of the diocese, and a number of priests, assembled to celebrate a solemn mass for the repose of the soul of Father Connell; and then, for the first time, Edmund Fennell moved from his position, walking straight down the chapel he entered the railed way of the little sanctuary, knelt down on the lowest step of the altar, and still in utter silence, served the mass—such is the technical expression—the same as he had often, often done, even in childish days when Father Connell used to be the officiating priest, and when his old and beloved features used to beam the affection which his heart felt upon the glossy-haired urchin who attended him.

The mass was over; the dignitaries and their clergymen assembled in the choir, round the coffin, and began to chaunt the sublime and

touching service, called in the Catholic church, the office of the dead. Edmund Fennell had preceded them to the head of the bier. The service continued for about three hours longer; and their preparations began to be made for the funeral. During the mass, one little occurrence should not be forgotten in this notice. The chapel was crowded to inconvenience. At a certain pause in the ceremony, a priest turned round on the altar, and strove to pronounce aloud, while his voice failed him, the following words:—

"Pray for the repose of the soul of the Reverend Phelim Connell, your late parish priest,"—all the people had been standing—the moment the words were heard, man, woman and child, suddenly knelt, and there was a burst of weeping petition to Heaven, smothered in sobs and groans, over which, women's stifled shrieks partially arose, and the bitter crying of the little boys of Father Connell's school, was distinctly heard.

The people would not permit the body to be conveyed to the grave, as was first proposed, by the directors of the funeral, in the hearse, which had borne it from Dublin—senseless animals, they said, should not move it on that occasion, while they had arms and shoulders to perform the duty. So they provided a handsome little thing, a miniature hearse, still, with plumes and velvet trappings, fringed with gold lace; and in this, almost exactly fitting it, the coffin was placed, and borne, palanquin-like, upon men's shoulders. On coming out of the chapel, the approach or lane leading to the little edifice, the churchyard, the priest's yard and garden, and the suburb street without, were found crowded with the more respectable citizens of all ranks—and after what has been said, it will be unnecessary to add, of all sects and parties, wearing ample scarfs and hat-bands of white linen, and waiting to form into funeral procession. There could not be less than thousands of them. Similar badges of

mourning had been provided for the boys of the parish school; aud amongst the general train, little fellows, almost children, the sons of the citizens, were also scarfed and hat-banded; —let it be permitted to us to record, that of these childish participators in the general demonstration of sorrow, two little O' Haras were included.

The order of the funeral being arranged, it procceded on its course. Before the coffin were men in black cloaks, with poles in their hands, draped at the top in white linen, to lead or clear the way. The truly venerable archbishop, the bishop of the diocese, and a great number of priest's followed them. Immediately behind the coffin, was the one way-ward, self-chosen chief mourner, walking companionless—alone. After him came the relations of the deceased, wearing, like him, black cloaks. After them again, the school-boys linked two and two, and headed by Mick Dempsey, stooped with grief, and blind with tears; then the

religious women and girls of Father Connell's choir, preceded by poor Mrs. Molloy, all wearing their white cloaks ; and then, the long procession of those wearing scarfs and hatbands, two and two, like the school-boys. Some private carriages made up the train.

The body was borne from the churchyard, in which, however, finally it was to rest, and proceeded by suburb ways, to the bridge, which led into the Irish town. This it passed, and continued all through the city to the second bridge, of which the position may be recollected. The multitude which accompanied the procession, at either side of the streets, was immense. As the little hearse passed the military posts of guard along its route, the soldiers were turned out, and headed by their officers, and imitated by the sentinels on duty, presented arms. The windows throughout the town, were thrown up, and filled with

ladies and female children, almost all wearing some insignia of mourning.

While the body was crossing the second bridge, the first bridge, a mile distant, became in view, and it was perceived that the lengthened lines of white scarfs and hat-bands, had not yet nearly passed the latter, for the private carriages were not visible. But the little hearse itself, had now but a short way to go. It was soon at its journey's end. The clergymen at its head, began to chaunt the magnificent *De profundus clamavi.* The nearest of the procession halted, and stood uncovered; and in a whisper, but with electric speed, the word ran along the whole train, through the whole town, until all stood still, and were uncovered also. The last rites ensued. A shovel full of clay was thrown upon the coffin, now in the grave; the hollow noise it made, found an echo in the breasts of all who were near enough to hear it, and the lament that

followed was awful. The grave was closed and mounded up. The sorrowful multitude gradually dispersed, and Father Connell's mortal portion was left, as he had wished it should be, " among the old parish priests, in their own old churchyard."

CHAPTER XVII.

Let many months pass away; let many tears be dried—many and most sincere ones; let the old soother of the deepest human sorrow, old Father Time, have his usual—and, but that it must be part of a great mysterious plan, we had almost said—contemptible influence upon the deepest grief, that the poor human heart can experience; at all events, let many months pass away.

And Edmund Fennell is now happy with his young wife, under her father's roof, where old Gaby insisted they should fix their residence.

Happy, indeed, he must needs have been, with such a wife as Helen; although, in the very buoyant time of his youth and of her's, there had passed over their spirit an experience and control, which checked mere buoyancy, and always sobered and often saddened their future life. They deeply learned, too, the error of a hasty and clandestine marriage, and the terrible consequences in which it may involve all concerned in it; and if, eventually, none of those consequences abided with them, they had to ascribe the blessing to their sincere contrition and remorse, and to their unceasing and minute efforts to lead and prop, adown the descent of life, by the easiest and most flowery paths, their good-hearted, though eccentric, and only surviving parent. As for him, the object of all this solicitude, he made himself happy, by calling Edmund, twenty times a day, "an infernal papist puppy;" admitting, meantime, privately, to Helen, that "he wouldn't exchange him for a score of the best Protestants

in the town, and that he was as fond of the rascal as if he had come out of his own shin-bone." And at Dick Wresham's school, where Gaby's attendance was now even more frequent than ever, as his son-in-law took all business and care off his hands, he would threaten to "dust the jacket" of any monkey who should dare to exclaim against "holy water," or any other characteristic of Popery; and his co-scholars highly relishing this new source of irritability seldom let a day pass without sending him home from school in a great rage. But, that home ever, ever cheered him. He found there his slightest wish anticipated, his most absurd whim or humour appeased or borne with. His second grandson was called after him. This boy, he insisted, should be brought up a Protestant, although he never took the slightest trouble to ensure the execution of the fiat he had pronounced. No matter. As his hopeful namesake grew up, he would promise him a silver tester, if he would engage to earn it by

"leathering the buff" of Edmund, the elder boy; and into the spirit of these pitched battles, old Gaby would enter, with as much vehemence as if the Protestant Establishment, in Church and State, depended upon the result; nay, so much of a partizan would he become, on such occasions, that if the Popish champion seemed likely to gain the victory, the considerate grandsire could not help dealing him some sharp raps on the knuckles, with his stick, thus unfairly to ensure a triumph to the Protestant combatant. It required much and serious counteraction in private, on the part of Edmund and Helen, successfully to defeat, in the minds of their children, these indifferent lessons.

Mary Cooney perfectly recovered from the effects of the wounds she had received; nor was her great beauty at all marred by them. Becoming assured that the poor woman who attended her, was really her mother, and much touched and interested by her deep, though rude affection, a serious project now occupied

her young heart, for the advantage of the potato-beggar. This was to imbue her mind with the same good and religious discipline which she had herself received, under Father Connell's roof. During Mary's progress to perfect recovery, which was tedious, a good opportunity was afforded for the purpose, and Mary's filial and pious efforts were not wholly thrown away. Her mother could not read, and it would have been useless at her age, to become her mistress in this respect. But Mary taught the poor woman all the prayers she had herself learnt, and afterwards her catechism, from beginning to end. The most important part of the young teacher's lessons, consisted however, in her really eloquent conversations with Nelly Carty, in explanation of articles of religious belief, or in observations upon them, directly calculated to make her a practical good christian; and here she was helped, not only by her vivid recollections of her old patron's continual expositions with herself, but also by

a fructifying graft upon them, from her own habitual thoughts, feelings, and experience. And the poor old creature would sit on the floor, at her daughter's feet, her hands clasped before her, and tears streaming down her cheeks, as she looked up into her face, listening to the girlish lecturer, with a love and an admiration, equal at least to her yearning anxiety, to become, under the hands of such an instructress, "a good woman at last."

When Mary fully recovered, Nelly Carty was easily prevailed on to give up her old trade, as well as her old irreligious courses, and she became settled in a neat little cabin, on a farm belonging to Edmund Fennell; engaged in such occupations as enabled her to earn her bread decently and honestly. One rather revengeful resolution, made in less graceless days, Nelly Carty would not however forego. When the next city assizes came round, Robin Costigan, who certainly owed the gallows a death, fairly due, was a second time hanged, in

the face of the shower of houses; and a woman, with the hood of her cloak drawn round her face, who after some whispering with the sheriff, seemed to obtain that officer's permission for what she was about to do, stood watchfully at the foot of the gibbet, while Robin pended from it, received the body in her arms when it was cut down, as on a similar occasion she had done, upwards of thirty years before, examined curiously the tie of the rope knot, and certain marks about the neck, apparently making very sure that the hangman, had on this occasion done his business properly, ere she would authorise the carcase to be conveyed for dissection, into the county hospital, quite near at hand.

Some passing notice ought here to be afforded to Robin Costigan's admiring and loving pupil.

As the gallows constructed on this occasion was not capable of holding more than two at a time, and as one of Robin's full-grown con-

federates was executed by his side, the Babby was compelled to wait for his turn upon it, at a few yards distance. And there he stood, philosophically contemplating the last struggles of his old master, in something of the same mood in which he had studied the death-throes of the old hen, suspended by his own hands, from the branch of a tree, in the vicinity of the ruined building. He could not indeed now fold his arms hard before him, inasmuch as they were tied hard behind him; and another difference was observable in the expression of his features, which marked a distinct feeling, not evinced on the former occurrence. When Robin Costigan ascended the ledge of the car, which was to be drawn from under him, and held out his neck for the noose, without uttering one word to the sheriff, or to the attending clergyman, in answer to all their expostulations, for a confession of his acts and his sins, by which the community at large, might be benefitted in this world, and himself in the next—

when this happened, and that soon after, Robin swung free of the car, the Babby deeming that he regarded a surpassing instance of bravery and high-mindedness, was seen to smile approvingly and triumphantly. And, so soon as he was summoned to his own doom, he imitated that example as well as he could; only leering or lolling out his tongue at the priest, or the sheriff, as his heroic master had done. Once indeed he waxed original, and spat upon the latter. Poor wretch! And was he held accountable for this manifestation of an acquired habit of feeling, which during his whole short life, had been instilled into him, and which he never had the slightest opportunity of estimating for what it really was? The Merciful and the Mighty One alone can answer this question.

After her complete restoration to health, Mary Cooney became in her turn, the pupil of her sister Helen. Surprised indeed, Helen was, to find her so far advanced in her educa-

tion, under Mick Dempsey's instructions; but the superior mind with which Heaven had blessed the beggar girl, soon became obvious to her sister, and Helen did not fail to do all she could to advance it. Every thing she herself knew, she taught Mary, and rapidly and clearly did Mary learn. Hence, in her twenty-first year, she was Helen's equal in literature, and in tasteful literature too, as well as in all Helen's little accomplishments. Even her manners, her mode of speaking, the tone of her voice, her very motions, nearly resembled those characteristics of her gentle tutoress; and the two sisters, notwithstanding the many original disproportions in their lot, became close companions—it need not be said loving ones.

If Mary was not able to eradicate her former feelings towards Edmund Fennell, she kept them watchfully cut and clipt down, even to the surface of her heart, every time they began to re-shoot upwards. But though many sought her in marriage, she could not for a long time be

brought to think of forming a new attachment. It was not until her thirtieth year, that, very well portioned by contributions from the united purses of her father and her brother-in-law, she became the wife of a respectable citizen.

Master Tom Naddy had, for many years, cherished certain hopes, growing out of a secret love for the beggar girl; but he did not tell his love, neither did he let the worm prey on his damask cheek. While hope continued, Tom would try to abandon what Gaby Mac Neary called "his hanging-bone-gait," whenever Mary Cooney required any service at his hands, and try to become as brisk as a bee. But as Mary improved under her sister's affectionate tuition, Tom's expectations, even in his own opinion, looked less sunny every day. He only whistled, however, over the fall of the castle he had erected, having the good sense to perceive that Mary was gradually and deservedly rising above his level, and ultimately, that she was quite beyond his reach. When she became the wife

of another, he good-humouredly gave up every idea of quitting his bachelor's free and easy state; and to all hints about changing his condition, he would answer—"there's more married than keeps good houses," or "I'm a great fool, but not such a fool as that would make me," or "there's no harum in lettin' well enough alone."

He lived out his whole life with Edmund Fennell, half friend, half servant, spending his time, to all appearances, very much to his own satisfaction. And besides superintending, cleverly and honestly, houses and lands, there was scarcely a question but that some of his leisure hours were devoted to the prompting to certain pranks, the young Fennells, particularly during their childhood, and earliest boyhood. Of these pranks, their grandfather was chiefly the object; and strange to say, the Popish and Protestant combatants would, on such occasions, enter into alliance, and make common cause against the instigator of their party feuds.

Once awakening from his after dinner nap, Gaby Mac Neary found himself fettered down fast, with innumerable small bonds, in his arm-chair—the result by the way, of Tom Naddy's recent perusal of Gulliver's Travels, and of his impartation of his knowledge, to his promising pupils. It was decided in council, that Gaby Mac Neary should perform the part of Gulliver; and it was in vain he tried to arise, and stamp with his stick, towards the imps who were laughing at him in one corner, or towards Tom Naddy, who was grinning at him from another. On a different occasion, after putting his spectacles on his nose, over and over again, enquiring at each trial "what the devil has come over ye, for spectacles?"—and still, not being able to see one jot thro' them, he would at length discover that the cause of his failure. was owing to their glasses having been carefully extracted. Again, the besom would somehow become metamorphosed into a blackamoor, and Gaby Mac Neary

would find the unsightly bed-fellow "cheek-by jowl" with him, in his bed, when he awoke in the morning. But worse still; Boxer, the rough-muzzled Popish terrier, being first set a snarling, was, by Tom Naddy's tuition, taught to growl out "Grandpapa," very distinctly—the operator holding his jaws, between his finger and thumb, and occasionally tightening or relaxing his grasp, so as to break up the animal's snarl into the word desired. Under these persecutions, Gaby vented all his abusive epithets on Tom Naddy; and it behoved Tom to keep his eye well about him, in order to avoid condign punishment; and his old master, unable to overtake him, in his dodgings round the parlour, or out of it, would hide behind the doors, and other screens of like convenience, to get one good hit at the offender. And yet, Gaby Mac Neary highly prized Tom Naddy, in common, indeed, with everyone around him.

And Tom was doomed to administer to the happiness of other folk. By his unremitting

agency, and, it is supposed, not to his pecuniary disadvantage, little Miss Bessy Lanigan and Mr. "Q. O. unexpounded," became united in holy wedlock; and to do the small lady common justice, it may be added, that Mr. Stanton, at least could not have made a better choice. She was very proud and glorified, if not very grateful, for the increased comforts and worldly consequence which he brought her; for a larger house, in a larger street; for larger breakfasts, dinners, and suppers of her own, than she had ever been accustomed to; for a larger wardrobe;—in fact, for everything on a larger scale: and to guard against any stint of his liberality, she sought out studiously and cunningly, to give him the peculiar marks of affection, which his temper and character required. From the day of his marriage, to the day of his death, he had not once to complain that his gold-headed cane stood an inch out of its prescribed resting place; and as to his queu, no hands but those of his wife, had ever so precisely ribboned it,

or so neatly adjusted it between his shoulders. Their union was not blessed with any little pledges of their loves; but they both entered, with all their hearts and souls, into the cultivation of a breed of nice little dogs, distinguished for long silky ears, and peculiarly speckled coats. And in this pursuit, they were successful, and consequently happy. Indeed, Mr. and Mrs. Stanton became publicly celebrated for the beautiful specimens of the canine race, that crowded around them; so much so that their breed of little dogs was eagerly sought after by all the old bachelors and old maids in the city and in the county.

The stalwart, the bearded, the ugly, but still the good-hearted Mrs. Molloy did not lose by her liberal donation towards the expenses of a certain sad journey, on a late most melancholy occasion. In fact, her "warm hearted boy" did not forget her. She was settled by him in what she herself called a "sthrong hucksther's shop," where she went on multiplying the reinstated

contents of her stocking. And here she exacted from Edmund Fennell's children a tribute of attention to be paid three or four times a week—to be eaten up rather three or four times a week, —for the ceremony consisted in devouring upon each of their visits a certain quantity of her home-made currant-cake. And if any of them failed in his or her duty, Mrs. Molloy, feeling much offended by the neglect, would, immediately on the occurrence of such omission, close and lock up her establishment, hasten to their house and scold their father and mother heartily for the bad bringing up of their children. So long as the good woman lived, whenever there was a new birth in the Fennell family or whenever any of the boys or girls were cutting their teeth, or indeed indisposed in any way, Mrs. Molloy conceived that nothing could be properly done without the advantage of her presence and assistance.

She was an old woman when the good and great man—great it is added, because he was

greatly-good—her venerable master, died. Yet she survived him for more than a dozen years; and she was blessed by the assurance of Edmund Fennell that he would gratify the now fondest wish of her heart, by closing her eyes, after her last breathing in this world. And her " warm hearted boy," kept his promise religiously, performing it not without many grateful recollections and true tears.

Although occasionally a very cross woman, and apt to make her displeasure known in a manner not to be mistaken, yet in good truth her heart bubbled over with the milk of human kindness. To be sure, her love for her species was shewn after a fashion of her own; and there was one individual of that species whom, though she by no means disliked him—Tom Naddy is meant—she never designated, to the hour of her death, by any other term than that of " kiln-dried brat."

THE END.

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